

Shakespeare Bust.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME II

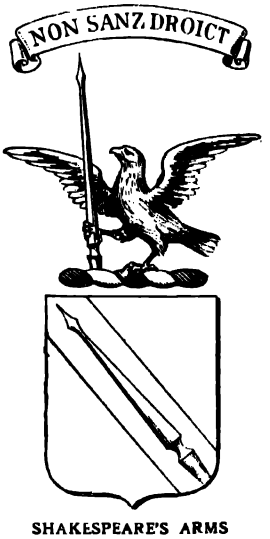
FROM THE AGE OF HENRY VIII TO THE AGE OF MILTON

BY

RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

AND

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SHAKESPEARE'S ARMS

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME

THE first volume of this work covered more than seven centuries of literary history; the second barely covers seventy years. The first was occupied to a considerable degree with the records of important literary movements enlisting numerous and nameless participators —such as the religious drama and ballad poetry—rather than with the individual authorship which almost engrosses the second. The first dealt with a time when British literature neither extended, nor was fitted to extend, beyond the British borders; the second treats of a period when, though still confined within insular limits, it possessed the power and awaited the opportunity of exerting a deep influence on the world.

The historical treatment of epochs so contrasted cannot be exactly the same. The chief divergence will be found in the slighter notice accorded to inferior writers who would have been welcome, if they had come sooner, and the ample space devoted to those who have made the British literature of the age European, especially its two pre-eminent representatives, Bacon and Shakespeare.

This volume, to the end of the chapters on Shakespeare, is written by the author of vol. i., and thence to the conclusion by the author of vols iii. and iv. The writers desire to record their obligations for literary assistance to Mr. A. W. Pollard and Mr. A. H. Bullen, and for aid in the department of illustration to Mrs. Christie-Miller, of Britwell Park; to Mrs. Sydney Pawling; to R. R. Holmes, Esq., King's Librarian, Windsor Castle; and to S. Arthur Strong, Esq., Librarian to the Duke of Devonshire.

R. G.
E. G.

November 1903.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT ELIZABETHAN PROSE WRITERS

WHEN, on the memorable November 17, 1558, the tidings came to Queen Elizabeth, sitting under a tree in Hatfield Park, of the death of her sister and predecessor, nothing seemed to indicate the glories, either in arms or arts, of a reign destined to unprecedented glory in both. The last two reigns had been unfortunate; one distracted by the struggles of ambitious ministers seeking to govern in the name of a boy-king; the other infamous for cruelty at home, and shameful for disaster abroad. Even in 1553 the sagacious Venetian envoy had noted the alarm of the English at the alliance of France and Scotland, and the national spirit and resources had since sunk lower still. Economic causes, in that age hard to comprehend and harder to remedy, aggravated the general depression. The great additions made and daily making to the world's stock of the precious metals had raised prices, rents, and by consequence taxes, to a degree previously unknown. Henry VIII. had allowed himself to be seduced into the expedient of debasing the currency, a practice continued by his successors, and the state of the finances was now nearly desperate. Since Henry's death, no one with any pretensions tc statesmanship, Cranmer alone excepted, had had a share in the government, except in the most subordinate capacities · the ablest men were merely



Queen Elizabeth

From a scarce print by Crispin de Passe after a drawing by Isaac Oliver

energetic like Northumberland, or merely astute like Gardiner. The blight on politics had extended to literature. More and Surrey and Wyatt seemed to have left no successors; at Elizabeth's accession her dominions contained hardly one author of recognised eminence. From every point of view the vessel of State seemed drifting on the rocks, but a breeze was to spring up unexpectedly, and bear her back to prosperous voyage on the open sea. Not less manifestly than in the day of the Armada, *afflavit Deus*.

The key to the marvellous change which was to ensue lies in the two watch-words we have already found so potent, Reformation and Renaissance. Nothing is more undeniably evident than the happy fate of the countries which embraced the Reformation in comparison with those which rejected it, except the further observation, less agreeable to the reformers, that they were rather indebted for this felicity to their rulers than to their preachers. Wherever the principles of the Reformation were adopted by the sovereign, the Reformation triumphed; wherever, with the single exception of Scotland, more apparent than real, the monarch sided with the Church, the Reformation was crushed. By virtually adhering to the Reformation Henry VIII. had saved the country from a civil war as terrible as that which, at Elizabeth's accession, was rendering the hereditary enemy, France, a cipher in European politics. At the same moment the Reformation gained the upper hand in Scotland, and the alliance of France and Scotland which had occasioned English statesmen so much anxiety fell away of itself. Thus were the two great sources of apprehension removed as though by enchantment, while at the same time England was, as it were, placed under bonds to adhere steadily to the Reformation as a condition of the friendship of Scotland, and the sympathies of French Huguenots, Dutch Protestants, and whoever else was helping to ward off the attacks which she might apprehend from continental powers. The principles of the Reformation do not here concern us, otherwise than in their connection with literature: but it is manifest that the mere assumption of a hostile attitude towards so much that had for centuries passed as



Launceston Church
From a drawing by F. Lyson

beyond discussion must have been a most potent intellectual stimulus, and provocative of mental activity in every direction.

influence of the Renaissance

Nor was the influence of the Renaissance less extensive or less salutary. It had not, as in Italy, produced any development of the arts; no Englishman of the period is remembered as architect, painter, or sculptor. When a great artist was wanted, a Torregiano had to be imported from Italy, or a Holbein from Germany. Even in the thirteenth century the magnificent statuary in Wells Cathedral had in all probability been executed by Italian sculptors: what native art could perform in Henry VIII.'s time may be seen in the rude though vigorous exterior sculpture of Launceston Church. Just as little was the reaction towards classical paganism, so conspicuous in Italy, visible in a country united to the ancient world by no affinities of blood, and remote from the silent preaching of ruined temples and monuments of ancient worship. The influence of the Renaissance in England was mainly educational, it did not immediately create a school of literature, but prepared the way for a new school uniting the best elements of the Renaissance school with the romantic. It had thoroughly permeated the upper classes of society, and transformed the fighting aristocracy of the Middle Ages, with just enough culture to appreciate the songs of a minstrel, into a society of polite and accomplished ladies and gentlemen. The high standard of cultivation attained in Elizabeth's time by the nobility and upper class of gentry is attested by a witness above suspicion, the simple and sober-minded William Harrison, author of the invaluable description of England published along with Holinshed's *Chronicles* in 1577. He is not backward to stigmatise the vices of the court; but of its merits he says:



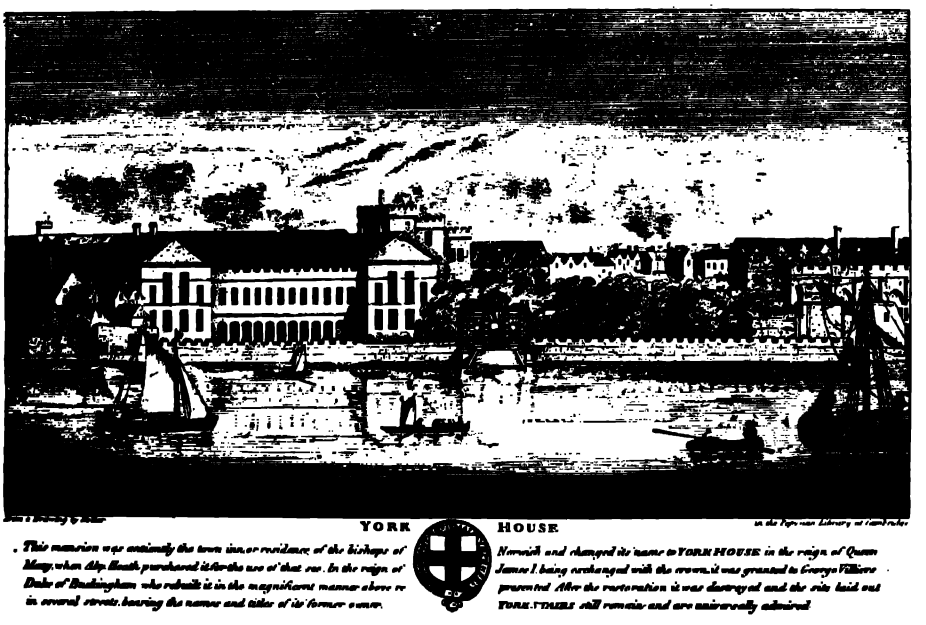
Sir Nicholas Bacon

After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

> This further is not to be omitted to the praise of both sorts and sexes of our courtiers here in England, that there are very few of them which have not their use and skill of sundry speeches, besides an excellent vein of writing before time not regarded. Troth it is a rare thing with us now to hear of a courtier which hath but his own language. And to say how many gentlemen and ladies there are that beside sound knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongue are thereto no less skilful in the Spanish, Italian, and French, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me, sith I am persuaded that as the noblemen and gentlemen do surmount in this behalf,

so these come very little or nothing at all behind them in their parts, which industry God continue, and accomplish that which otherwise is wanting.

The "excellent vein of writing before time not regarded" was when Harrison wrote on the point of overflowing from literary exercises and private correspondence into published literature. Style had begun to be sought as a distinction in the days of Henry VIII., and by Harrison's time the conception of literary merit apart from worth of matter was fully formed, and even carried to extravagant lengths by Lyly and his school. Spenser, Raleigh, and Hooker were then about twenty-four, Bacon sixteen, Shakespeare thirteen. Du Bartas, writing about the same time, could find no



YORK HOUSE

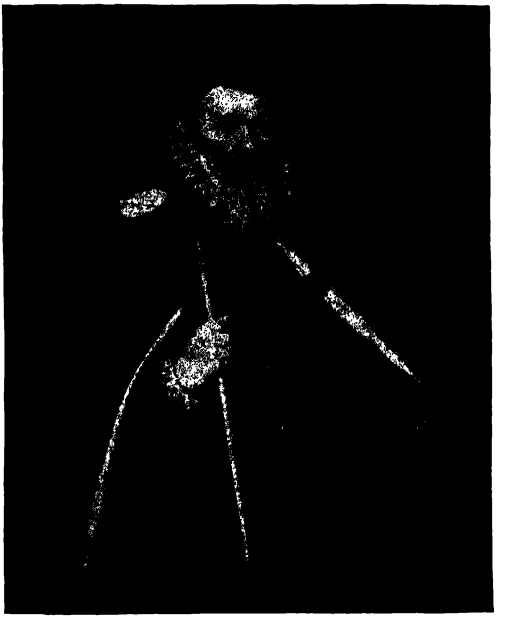
. This mansion was anciently the town inn or residence of the bishops of Meaux when they first purchased it from the see of that city. In the reign of Duke of Buckingham who rebuilt it in the magnificent manner above re in several streets bearing the names and titles of its former owner.

Norwich and changed its name to YORK HOUSE in the reign of Queen James I. being exchanged with the crown it was granted to George Villiers promoted After the restoration it was destroyed and the site laid out YORK STREET still remain and are universally admired

one to extol in contemporary English literature except the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, whom Nash indeed names among "the chief pillars of our English speech," but who does not appear to have composed anything except speeches and legal arguments.

English prose had long been capable of expressing the highest thoughts, but the high thinkers had delayed to appear, and its resources, even in our own land, were comparatively unappreciated. Beyond the British Isles it was an entire dead letter. So, indeed, it was long to remain: but the reproach was about to be transferred from the barrenness of native genius to the stolidity, or rather perhaps the incuriousness, of foreign criticism. No foreigner, at the end of the sixteenth century, had the smallest idea that in the middle period of that century, within twelve years of each other (1552–1564), six men had been born in England, two of whom greatly surpassed, while the others fully rivalled, the genius, and in the long run the fame, of any

European contemporary, Cervantes alone excepted. It is remarkable that this great period is exactly bisected by the accession of the great Queen, who cannot, indeed, be reckoned among the especially munificent, or the especially discerning, patrons of literature, but without whom it may well be doubted whether Shakespeare would have written, or Bacon meditated, or Spenser sung. Circumstances, rather than deliberate intention, made her and her country the standard-bearers of the cause of freedom in Europe, and the most efficient instruments of the choice which Europe was called upon to make between the mediæval and the modern spirit. The perception of issues so momentous could in that age be but dim; yet its influence is shown by the vast development of men's conceptions, and the sudden outburst of original genius. Retracing the period, we ourselves are distinctly conscious of an atmosphere never breathed before, of a great elevation of ideals, public and private, and at the same time of tangible objects of ambition tending in the direction of national glory and aggrandisement. This alliance of the practical and the romantic is the special charm of the age, and not merely in England; but it was the peculiar happiness of England to be contending in the cause of the world as well as her own. Something not very dissimilar was seen at a later day when she fought single-handed against Napoleon, and this period also was signalised by an extraordinary outburst of original genius.



Lord Burghley
After a portrait attributed to Mark Gheeraedts

It is, nevertheless, a remarkable fact that this later outbreak was confined to poetry and its ally fiction. Apart from Scott and Miss Austen, not a single prose writer deserving to be accounted great appeared in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, while the blaze of poetical genius, leaving Shakespeare and Milton out of the question, surpassed everything that England had previously known. It was far otherwise in the reign of Elizabeth, whose highest literary glory indeed is to have given the world its greatest dramatic poet, but whose four great prose writers would alone have rendered it illustrious in the history of letters. Bacon and Raleigh's most important productions belong to the reign of James, but the men had not only grown but ripened as Elizabethans. Hooker and Sidney fall entirely within Queen Elizabeth's period. To treat these

four illustrious writers together involves some departure from strict chronological order, but seems preferable to mingling them with lesser men. Isolated from their contemporaries they proclaim more eloquently what is, after all, the dominant note of the time, the immense stride forward which England, so long hemmed and fettered, was making at last. Shakespeare, a world in himself, obviously requires independent treatment; as also does the rival whom Ariosto, Tasso, and Camoens found in Edmund Spenser.



Francis Bacon
From his "Posthumous Works," 1657

Francis Bacon was born on January 22, 1561, at York House, Charing Cross, the official residence of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, who ever since Elizabeth's accession had held the office of Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, which he retained until his death in 1579. Few of Elizabeth's counsellors held a higher place in her esteem, or had a larger share in affairs of State, especially in connection with ecclesiastical matters; nor could the future statesman and philosopher have been brought up under more favourable auspices. It is indeed unlikely that a man so occupied with judicial and political business as the Lord Keeper can have devoted much personal attention to the education of his son, but the want must have been well supplied, and probably in great measure by the care of his mother, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, and sister-in-law of Burghley, who is described as a woman of strong character and convictions. Bacon must have been a youth of most precocious abilities, since we find him proceeding to Trinity College, Cambridge, at what now appears the preposterous age of twelve years and three months. Queen Elizabeth, indeed, is said to have been so much impressed by his early promise as to have playfully called him her young Lord Keeper, and the dissatisfaction which he afterwards represented himself at having felt with his Cambridge studies, which probably contributed to shorten his stay at the University, was a remarkable proof of mental independence. It was not, as might have been the case with many a youth of lively parts, founded upon dis-

taste for the dryness of logical and philosophical studies, but upon the perception which few of the wisest of that age had yet attained, that the scholastic philosophy of the time was mere barren logomachy, and imparted at most the skill to juggle with words, leaving the pupil uninformed as to the nature of things. Partly for this cause, and partly, it may be conjectured, from the anxiety of his father, now above sixty, to push him on in his destined profession while parental interest could yet avail, Bacon left the University in 1575, and commenced the study of the law at Gray's Inn at fourteen, the age at which, in the nineteenth century, it was deemed little short of a miracle that one of the most illustrious of his successors in the Chancellorship should have been admitted to matriculate at Oxford. The study of jurisprudence must have been in every way congenial to him, and he had doubtless made much progress when, in 1576, it was interrupted by a summons to study the great world in the capacity of attaché to the French embassy of Sir Amias Paulet. Paulet, a man of inflexible virtue, possessed few of the characteristic merits of the diplomatist, but the observation of the society and the politics of that brilliant but distracted court and epoch must have been invaluable to Bacon, and goes far to account for the entire absence from him of that pedantry and self-sufficiency from which the studious and precocious, especially when mainly self-taught, find it so hard to free themselves. With the possible exception of his parents, no one, it may be remarked, can be cited as having exercised any direct personal influence on the formation of Bacon's mind, nor does he appear to have belonged to any clique or union of sympathetic persons. Even more than Milton's, "his soul was like a star and dwelt apart." In 1579 he was recalled to England by the death of his father, from whom the claims of his mother, brother, half-brothers and sisters, besides the great expense Sir Nicholas had incurred in building his mansion at Gorhambury, prevented his inheriting much. He sought the protection of his uncle Burghley, and, having been called to the bar in 1582, was returned to Parliament for Melcombe Regis in 1584. In 1585 he addressed to the Queen a "letter of advice" on the state of public affairs, remarkable for its maturity of wisdom and the expediency of the conduct it recommends to be observed both towards malcontent Roman Catholics and loyal but dissatisfied Puritans. It reveals at once the magnificent intellectual power which constituted Bacon's strength and the insensibility to emotional sympathies which became the chief



Sir Francis Walsingham

After a portrait by Zuccero

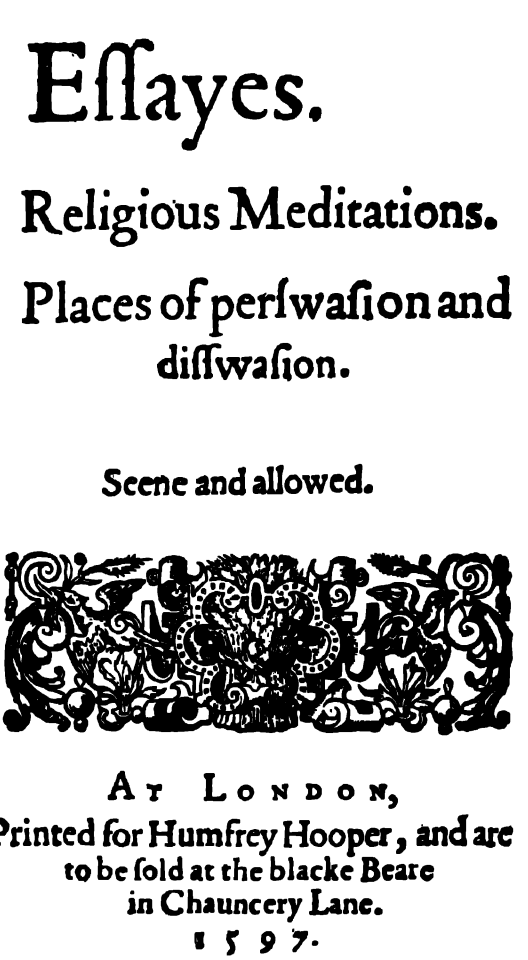
source of his weakness. His advice as regards both Romanists and Puritans is entirely sound, but his conclusions are reached by regarding Romanism and Puritanism mainly as political forces. Upon his own plane he is omniscient, but there is a plane above his of which he has no perception. Respecting the vexed question of his character, we may say at once that we find no symptom of moral obliquity in him; but we cannot help being conscious of a certain deadness towards exalted moral sentiment. No action of his life is incapable of defence, or at least of palliation; but, whenever two courses of action are presented for his acceptance, he is almost sure to select the one which, whatever other reasons may be alleged in its favour, has least to recommend it upon the score of generosity.



Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

Although Bacon's moderate and far-seeing views were in advance of Elizabeth and her chief counsellors, they could not fail to recommend him as a man of mark. He began to be noticed, was made a bencher of his Inn, and became a leading member of the House of Commons. "His hearers," says Ben Jonson, "could not cough or look aside from him without loss;" and his readers may observe that his rhetorical skill is not inferior to his argumentative power. Within five years of the composition of the "Letter of Advice" he was employed to write pamphlets in the name of Walsingham. "It was Bacon's fate through life," writes Mr. Gardiner, "to give good advice only to be rejected, and yet to impress those who received it with a sufficiently good opinion of his intellectual capacity to gain employment in work which hundreds of other men could have done as well." The first important incident in Bacon's life after he had fairly assumed this character of the valued and not unheeded and yet commonly ineffectual counsellor of sovereigns and statesmen was his friendship with Essex, which began in 1591. On Essex's side this was an ardent attachment, indissoluble save by the infidelity, real or supposed, of the other party; on Bacon's it was the regard of a tutor for a promising pupil, liable therefore to extinction if the promise should be falsified. There is no reason to mistrust Bacon's own subsequent account of it. "I held at that time my lord to be the fittest instrument to do good to the State; and therefore I applied myself to him in a manner which I think happeneth rarely among men." This was probably as high an ideal of friendship as Bacon was capable of attaining; he could not entertain an entirely disinterested affection, but could love for a consideration, which need not be, and in this instance was not, of a sordid or self-interested

character, but might be the service of the State, and the triumph of his own ideas. That these were serious motives with him was soon (1594) shown by one of the most honourable actions of his life, his resistance to the demand of the Queen and his own uncle Burghley that the Commons should consent to join with the Lords in a conference respecting the grant of a subsidy to the Government. The subsidy itself was not in question, but Bacon objected to the Commons' sacrifice of privilege in consenting to discuss questions of supply with the other house, and, to the great advantage of the country, carried his point to the frustration of his hopes of the Attorney-Generalship for which he was then a candidate. The moral conscience mayhave been weak, or rather undeveloped in him; the intellectual conscience was strong. The history of his connection with Essex is entirely in harmony with this view. So long as eminent public service could be expected from Essex, their union was perfect. With all the generous ardour of his nature, Essex exerted himself to procure office for Bacon, and, when his efforts failed, made him liberal gifts. Bacon on his part, fulfilled the functions of a wise counsellor until Essex's indiscreet conduct in his Irish government and after his return from it showed beyond dispute that he was incapable of justifying Bacon's hopes of him, when the latter did not hesitate to appear against him as one of the Queen's counsel. The situation was repeated with intense aggravation when, after Essex's frantic attempt at insurrection in 1601, Bacon, appearing against him as one of the prosecuting counsel, contributed to bring him to the block. Here, it is obvious, the intellectual conscience entirely acquitted him. Essex's offence was notorious; his punishment, if severe, was just; it is the duty of a queen's advocate to prosecute rebels. But it is equally plain that if Bacon had been endowed with fine sensibilities, such conduct towards his benefactor would have been impossible. One thing alone could really justify it, the apprehension of a failure of justice if he refused


Eſſayes.

Religious Meditations.

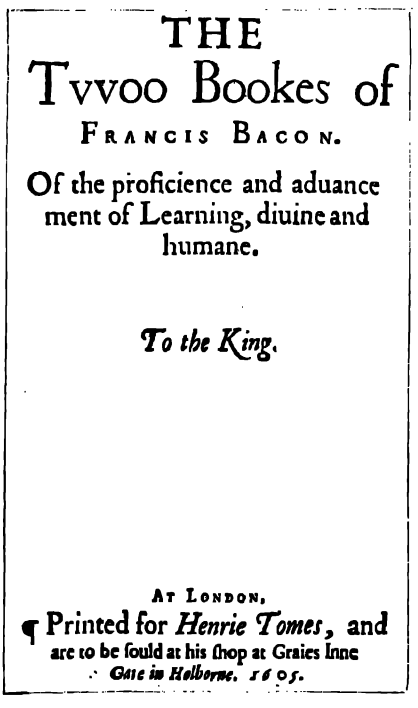
Places of perſwaſion and diſſwaſion.

Seene and allowed.

AT LONDON,
Printed for Humfrey Hooper, and are to be ſold at the blacke Beare in Chauncery Lane.
1597.

Title-page of the First Edition of Bacon's Essays

to appear, and of this there was no prospect whatever.[1] The verdict upon him here as almost everywhere must be, his heart was not bad but it was cold. The dignity and grandeur which continually seem to exalt his character no less than his writings have always, or almost always, an intellectual origin. From the moral point of view he may be said to hold an intermediate position between the two other great men of modern times especially distinguished for supremacy of intellect, and sufficiently well known to us to admit of comparison, as far below Goethe as above Napoleon. "The world," Professor Minto justly admonishes us, "has yet to see the intellect of a Bacon combined with the philanthropy of a Howard." This is a general law; a special cause of Bacon's shortcomings may be read in his portrait, where the handsome and intellectual features are marred by an unmistakable expression of caution and timidity.


THE
Tvvoo Bookes of
FRANCIS BACON.
Of the proficience and aduance ment of Learning, diuine and humane.
To the King.
AT LONDON,
¶ Printed for *Henrie Tomes*, and are to be ſould at his ſhop at Graies Inne gate in Holborne. 1605.

Title-page of the First Edition of the "Advancement of Learning"

During his adherence to Essex, Bacon made his first appearance as an English author, by publishing his essays in 1597, along with short "Sacred Meditations," and a fragment on the "Colours (popular conceptions) of Good and Evil." The little volume contained only ten of the fifty-eight essays now appearing in his writings, a circumstance not devoid of interest as indicating the themes upon which he first felt an inclination to treat. They will be more fully noticed further on; at present it must suffice to remark, that they are by far the most generally known and popular of his works. Innumerable examples of their pithy wisdom have passed into general acceptance and become household words. Their philosophy is practical rather than speculative, but that Bacon's early manhood was largely devoted to profound study seems evinced by the remarkable fact that for ten years after his call to the bar he never held a brief until he was obliged to appear as an advocate to remove an objection to his appointment as Attorney-General. From this time his appearances were frequent, and although he cannot have possessed the erudition of a Coke, ignorance of the law was never imputed to him.

The death of Elizabeth and accession of James in 1603 seemed to offer a great opportunity to Bacon. Elizabeth belonged to a previous generation, and her ideas of policy had long ago taken shape. James, a new man, was at the same time a very able man, and well-intentioned besides, but unhappily misled by an over-estimate of his wisdom, deficient in the force of character requisite to keep a great object steadily before him, and disfigured by a

[1] One of Bacon's most illustrious successors in the Attorney-Generalship, Sir Philip Yorke, afterwards Chancellor as Lord Hardwicke, was similarly called upon to prosecute his benefactor, Lord Macclesfield. He was excused, but he must have appeared or resigned if the charge had been political.

host of paltry and unkingly failings. Bacon seemed exactly the mentor whom such a sovereign required, and happy would it have been for the kingdom if James could have accorded him unlimited confidence. This could hardly be expected, and nothing less could have given Bacon the authority requisite for the accomplishment of his great designs, which may almost be summed up in the word union—union of spirit between Churchmen and Puritans, Parliamentary union between England and Scotland, conciliation of Roman Catholics at home and Irish malcontents across St. George's Channel, above all the creation of a thoroughly good understanding between the King and the House of Commons. In none of these endeavours did Bacon achieve any substantial success, while he was often usefully employed in salving wounds and staving off collisions by his growing authority with the Commons. These palliatives, however, were far from going to the real root of the matter, which Bacon sought to deal with in a succession of able memoirs on affairs of State addressed to the King, who we need not doubt read and admired, but rarely acted. Little could be done so long as Bacon was unable to temper James's excessive notions of his prerogative and his financial extravagance, errors to which it was difficult to allude without forfeiting his favour. On the other side, Bacon must have felt impatient and contemptuous of the Commons, whose narrowness and selfishness wrecked James's statesmanlike scheme for union between England and Scotland. It is no wonder that acknowledging his "errors" in the dedication to his *Advancement of Learning* (1605) he should have especially deplored "this great one that led the rest: that, knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book than play a part, I have led my life in civil causes, for which I was not very fit by nature, and more unfit by the preoccupation of my mind." Bacon cannot have really deemed himself less fit than Cecil for public business, and his self-reproach must be construed partly as a perception that in his efforts for the public good he was sacrificing yet higher objects; partly as disgust at the futility of this sacrifice, which so far had benefited neither the nation nor himself. That, however, he had not to reproach himself with an entire neglect of the higher wisdom is proved by the book to which these complaints are prefixed. *The Advancement of Learning* contains the germ of everything that distinguishes him from former and contemporary thinkers. In 1608, as is most probable, he commenced the composition of the *Novum Organum*. In 1609 he wrote a eulogy of Elizabeth and an able memoir on the plantation of Ireland. In 1612 the *Essays*, which had already had four publications, were increased to



Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

thirty-eight in a new edition. A Latin treatise, more esteemed in his day than in ours, the *De Sapientia Veterum*, an ingenious but fanciful attempt to penetrate the profound meaning supposed to be latent in ancient myths, had been published in 1610.

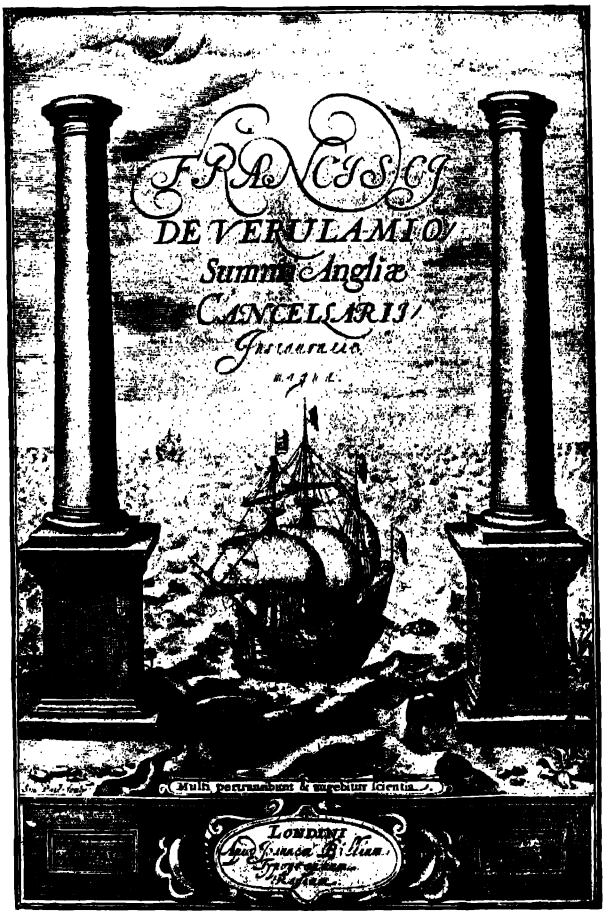
Bacon had married in 1606. Little is known of his wife excepting her respectable middle-class extraction, and that some dissatisfaction with her in his later years led him to revoke the will he had made in her favour. He had no family. In 1607 he became Solicitor-General. Further promotion seems to have been barred for the time by the hostility of Cecil, the real prime minister, whose experience, sagacity, industry, and above all financial ability, made him indispensable, and who, though Bacon's cousin, had no intention of encouraging so formidable a rival. On Cecil's death in 1612, Bacon discerned his opportunity, and sought the King's leave to address to him a series of memorials on affairs of State. His starting-point was to be the expectation that a new parliament was shortly to be convoked, the dominant thought the effectual reconciliation of King and Parliament, and the establishment of an understanding for preventing future controversies. James permitted Bacon to write, and the result was a series of State-papers drawn up in 1613, of which Mr. Gardiner says: "To carry out this programme would have been to avert the evils of the next half-century;" regarding, that is, the religious toleration elsewhere advocated by Bacon as a portion of it. His enlightened views found but partial acceptance with either King or Parliament, each being willing to accept the part which suited themselves, but disinclined to concede anything to the other side. The King, nevertheless, showed his appreciation of Bacon by making him Attorney-General in 1613; and the Commons, to whom his private communications to the King were unknown, marked their approbation of his public conduct by relaxing in his favour their prohibition of the Attorney-General's sitting in the House. Had the management of the Parliament rested with Bacon, it might not have been necessary to dissolve it shortly afterwards. Its sittings were suspended for seven years, and when it met again it was to hurl Bacon from office.



Sir Edward Coke
After the portrait by Cornelius Jansen

Bacon's political conduct during the interim had necessarily been that of a courtier rather than of a statesman. As Attorney-General it was his duty to conduct prosecutions ordered by the crown; in this he was zealous and efficient, and he began to see his way to the Chancellorship. Convinced that, in

his own words, "by indignities men rise to dignities," he was not averse to flatter the favourite, Somerset, whom he was afterwards to prosecute for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury; upon Somerset's fall he turned to the new favourite Villiers. Yet, considering the important part which Villiers was called upon to play, Bacon can hardly be censured for having advised him, and must be commended for advising him well. His private relations both with Villiers and the King were less defensible, they reveal no moral obliquity, but a servility excusable in an ordinary courtier, humiliating in the greatest intellect of his age. He had now (January 1618) gained the object of his ambition, the Chancellorship, having been Lord Keeper since Ellesmere's death in the previous year, and in the following July was raised to the peerage as Baron Verulam. He approved himself rapid beyond precedent in the despatch of justice; and so little complaint was made of his decisions that they must be assumed to have been sound. Politically he was a cipher; the questions of the day related to foreign policy, and Bacon's statesmanlike and courageous advocacy of the cause of Protestantism all over Europe was unpalatable to a court bent upon political and matrimonial alliance with Spain. Bacon found consolation in the establishment of his philosophical fame by the publication of his *Novum Organum*, described as the second part of the *Instauratio Magna*, in 1620. His position seemed perfectly secure when, within a few days of the attack which overthrew him, he gained a step in the peerage as Viscount St. Albans, but he was now to expiate the great error of his life in having built his worldly greatness not upon merit but upon court favour. James's entire policy was distasteful to the nation, and the Commons met in 1621 determined to visit it upon his favourite Villiers. Villiers and the King had been concerned in granting certain obnoxious monopolies in the guise of patents, which Bacon, in his official



Title-page of Bacon's "Novum Organum," 1620

character, had approved, probably almost as a matter of course. The attack upon patents and patentees was checked by the interposition of the King, and the Commons, willing to strike at Villiers through Bacon, whom they regarded as his creature, turned unexpectedly upon the latter with a totally unforeseen charge of judicial corruption, he having, it was affirmed, systematically accepted bribes from suitors. It seems almost incredible, but is certain, that the morality of that day permitted the judge to receive presents from litigants after he had decided in their favour. Bacon himself allowed this, but had laid it down that a judge must on no account accept gifts during the hearing of a case. It was, however, but too clearly proved that he had infringed his own rule; and although he was able to show that in most instances he had decided against the tempter, and could not therefore be said to have sold justice, the scandal was undeniable. Though conscious to himself that his integrity was really unstained, Bacon could not assume the haughty attitude of injured innocence; nor in any case was he the man to maintain such an attitude in the face of irritated public opinion. He adopted the wisest course in a worldly point of view by confessing his fault and throwing himself upon the mercy of the peers, his judges. A high-minded sovereign would have accepted his resignation and stopped further proceedings; but James and Villiers were without doubt heartily glad to find so convenient a scapegoat, and thought they did enough by practically remitting the very severe penalties pronounced by the judgment of the Peers, whose final decision is thus recorded:

The Lords having agreed upon the sentence to be given against the Lord Chancellor, did send a message to the House of Commons, That the Lords are ready to give judgment against the Lord Viscount St. Albans, Lord Chancellor, if they, with their Speaker, will come to demand it.

In the mean time, the Lords put on their robes; and answer being returned of this message and the Commons come; The Speaker came to the Bar, and, making three low obeisances, said:

The Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the Commons House of Parliament have made complaint unto your Lordships of many exorbitant offences of bribery and corruption committed by the Lord Chancellor. We understand that your Lordships are ready to give judgment upon him for the same. Wherefore I, their Speaker, in their name, do humbly demand and pray judgment against him the Lord Chancellor, as the nature of his offence and demerits do require.

The Lord Chief Justice answered, Mr. Speaker, upon the complaint of the Commons against the Lord Viscount St. Albans, Lord Chancellor, the High Court hath thereby, and of his own confession, found him guilty of the crimes and corruptions complained of by the Commons, and of sundry other crimes and corruptions of like nature.

And therefore this High Court (having first summoned him to attend, and having received his excuse of not attending by reason of infirmity and sickness, which he protested was not feigned, or else he would most willingly have attended) doth nevertheless think fit to proceed to judgment; and therefore this High Court doth adjudge:

1. That the Lord Viscount St. Albans, Lord Chancellor of England, shall undergo fine and ransom of forty thousand pounds.

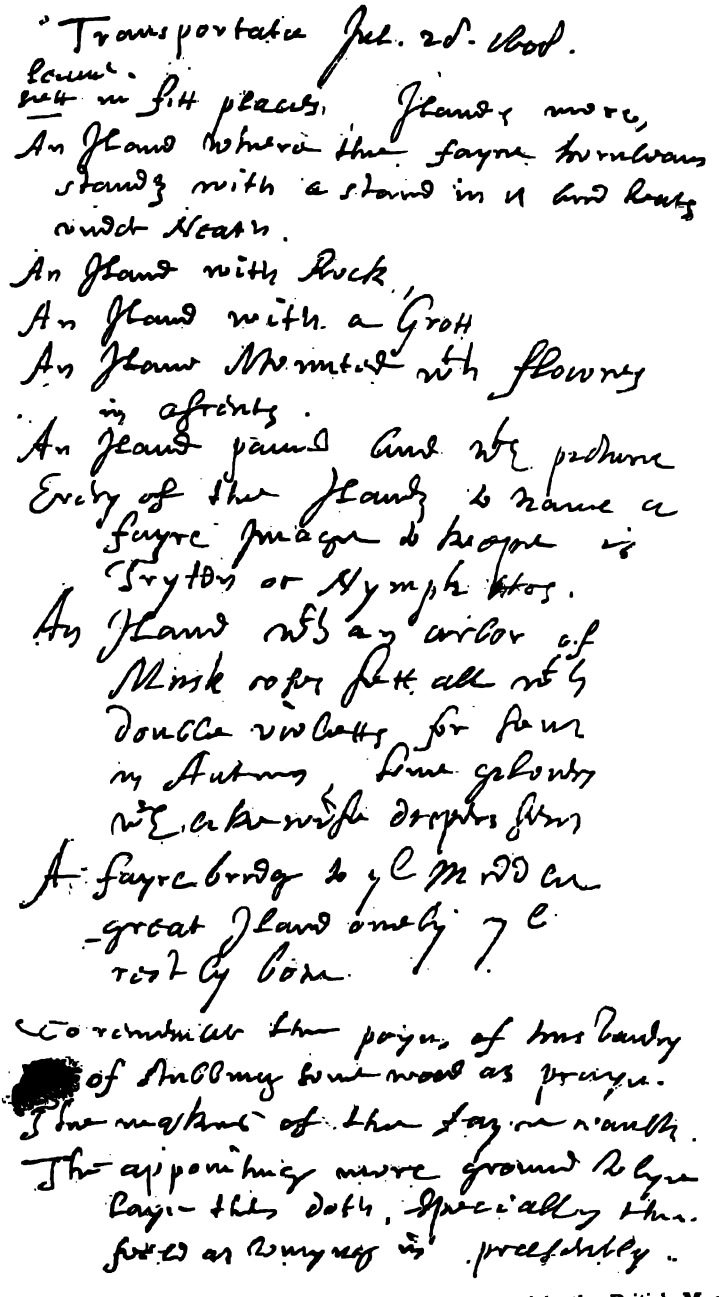
2. That he shall be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure.

3. That he shall for ever be incapable of any office, place, or employment in the State or Commonwealth.

4. That he shall never sit in Parliament, nor come within the verge of the Court.

This is the judgment and resolution of this High Court.

The Prince his Highness was entreated by the House, that, accompanied with divers of the Lords of this House, he would be pleased to present this sentence



Facsimile page from a MS. Note-book of Bacon's, preserved in the British Museum

given against the late Lord Chancellor to His Majesty. His Highness was pleased to yield unto this request

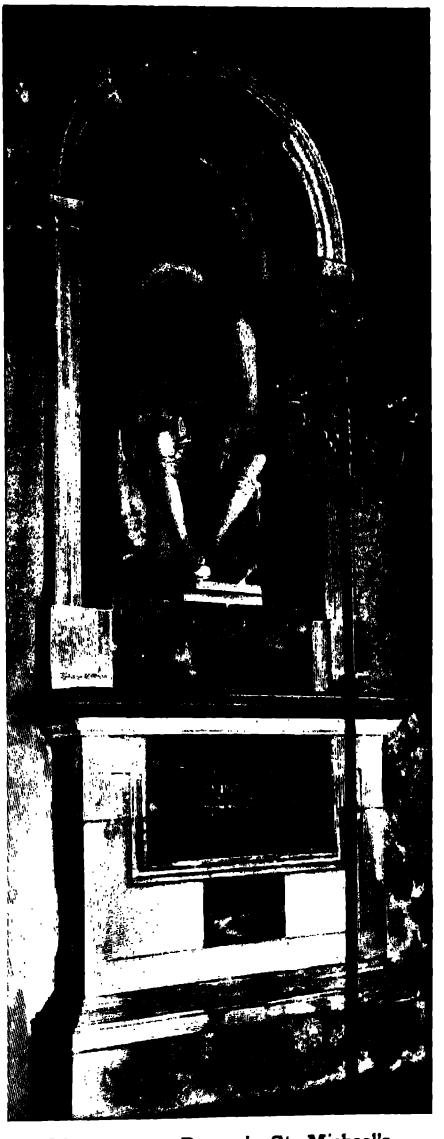
The animosity, almost amounting to malignity, of Southampton throughout

the proceedings is very noticeable; he clearly remembered Bacon's share in the proceedings against himself and Essex. Judged by the standard of our day Bacon's conduct appears flagitious; according to that of his own it amounted at most to culpable disregard of appearances, for clearly the gift which the judge was permitted to accept after trial might have been the fulfilment of a corrupt bargain entered into previously. Bacon must here as elsewhere be acquitted of deliberate wrong-doing, but here as elsewhere censured or compassionated for a deplorable lack of moral sensitiveness. It is characteristic of the duality of his nature that his intellectual conscience did not mislead him, and even gave him strength to rejoice at the purification of justice, though to his own shame and detriment. "I was," he said, "the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure that was in Parliament these two hundred years."

It is gratifying to be able to believe that Bacon's spirit was by no means crushed by his fall. He turned immediately to his *History of Henry VII.*, which was completed by October, published in the following year, and translated into Latin by the author. It proves that he might have been a great historian, and excites lively regret that the merest fragment was written of the life of Henry VIII. which was to have followed it. Bacon's judgments on the men and affairs of that eventful reign would have been invaluable. The rest of his life is too justly described by Mr. Spedding as "a continual struggle to obtain by the help of others the means of pursuing the great purpose for which he lived, and generally a losing struggle." James applauded the resolution of "our cousin," "degere vitam quietam et tranquillam in studiis et contemplatione rerum, atque hoc modo etiam posteritati inservire," but, under the sinister influence of Buckingham, as is probable, refrained from aiding him to carry it out. Like his successor, Lord Westbury, under somewhat similar circumstances, he offered to devote his leisure to codifying the law. The offer was not accepted, nor could he obtain the provostship of Eton for which he applied, or prevail upon Charles I. to recall him to the House of Lords. That he did not feel himself estranged from politics may be gathered from his *Considerations touching a War with Spain*, written when the failure of the Spanish match had established the soundness of his views on foreign policy. His main attention, nevertheless, was devoted to natural philosophy. *The Advancement of Learning* was republished in 1623 in a Latin form and with most extensive additions, as *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. For the rest of his life Bacon was active in the observations and experiments designed to confirm the truth of his great principle that knowledge comes from the study of Nature. Some of these were published by himself, others appeared after his death under the title of *Sylva Sylvarum*. He may be said to have laid down his life in the cause. A chill caught in a trivial experiment upon the antiseptic properties of snow brought him to the tomb on April 9, 1626. Even after his fall he had affected a magnificent style of living, and he died deeply in debt. But he had other possessions to bequeath than the goods of this world. A few months previously he had written in his will the oft-quoted words: "For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches and to foreign nations and the next ages."

As an author, Bacon is a representative of his age, but surpasses it where it is strongest, and avoids in great measure its characteristic defects. The prose of the period has a general air of loftiness and magnanimity, and

Bacon's communicates this impression more impressively than any other. Whatever may be known or surmised against his character, no reader while reading him can conceive of him as other than a magnanimous man. It was an age of metaphors and similes, and Bacon's are more numerous and more striking than those of any prose contemporary. In truth, his vivid perception of what might be but superficial analogies sometimes misguided his judgment, though it never prejudiced him his style. Perspicuity of style and methodical arrangement of matter are not conspicuous among the literary virtues of the period, but Bacon possessed both. As with Chaucer, his genius is attested by his perennial freshness. Representative as he is of his own time, no contemporary has so much the air of a modern.



Monument to Bacon in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans

Bacon's "Essays"

It is remarkable that none of the four great writers whom we have selected as the four dominant figures of Elizabethan prose were, strictly speaking, men of letters. Hooker never affected any character but that of the divine; Raleigh's principal works were composed to record his own exploits, or solace his captivity; banishment from court produced Sidney's *Arcadia*, and amorous disappointment his *Astrophel and Stella*; while the motive of most of Bacon's works is not literary but scientific. That they should nevertheless have so greatly excelled professed authors is an indication that the man of thought was not so widely severed from the man of action as in our day, and that Captain Sword and Captain Pen kept closer company then than now. Bacon comes nearer to the modern ideal than his contemporaries, his ordinary pursuits having a nearer affinity than theirs to the literary life. Yet even the most literary of his works, the Essays, does not

read like the production of a professional author. Much of it might well pass for registered self-communings or memoranda for his own guidance in his pursuit of power, and wealth, and fame. The extraordinary point, which gives it a piquancy far surpassing that of any other work of precepts, is the alliance of this mere self-seeking with so ample an endowment of the wisdom from above. There is little to condemn absolutely, but much that savours rather of the counsel of Ahithophel than of the schools of the prophets; much again that could hardly be refined upon by Ideal Virtue This duality is one secret of the permanence and immense popularity of the book, equally acceptable to the children of this world and to the children of light. It is but natural that one of the least satisfactory of the Essays should be that on Love, which, compared with the discourse of other great men upon this immortal theme, seems *carbo pro thesauro*. Yet it is most characteristic; for Bacon, the man of intellect, sees above all things in love the perturbing force that overthrows wisdom and turns counsel into foolishness. Characteristic it is, therefore, that he should regard Love as an inconvenient, almost an inimical phenomenon: what is really disappointing is that he should appear able to conceive of him merely as an extravagant and irrational passion. With friendship he is more at home; friendship is really in his mind when he eulogises love. "A crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Yet throughout his Essay on Friendship the note is pitched disappointingly low: we hear far more of the advantages and commodities of friendship than of its divinity. In both these essays Bacon creeps where Emerson soars: yet in the parts of the subject which come within the domain of the intellect his wisdom is supreme and authoritative. These are indeed golden words:

> Friendship maketh a fair day in the affections from storms and tempests: but it maketh daylight in the understanding out of darkness and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another. He tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally he waxeth wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas: Dry light is ever the best. And certain it is that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment, which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth and that a man giveth himself as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer. How many things are there which a man cannot with any face or comeliness say or do himself! A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them. A man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg: and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth which are blushing in a man's own.

None of Bacon's Essays are more interesting than those in which he affords us glimpses of himself. The essay on masques, for example, although he

somewhat contemptuously dismisses the subject with, "Enough of these toys," acquires extraordinary interest when it is remembered how actively he was himself at various times concerned in the production of such entertainments at the Inns of Court. The Essay on Gardens is a mirror of his taste in gardening; the Essay on Plantations shows the attention he had given to questions of colonisation, in which he had a personal concern: his admirable advice to judges and advocates bespeaks the decorum of his own court. Ere he has yet been called to the chancellorship he here gives himself counsel, to have followed which would have averted his ruin:

> Do not only bind thine own hands, or thy servants' hands from taking; but bind the hand of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion.

In great part the Essays are a very enchiridion of generous sentiment: yet indications are not wanting that the writer's moral nature was not of the most exalted:

> Certainly there be not two more fortunate properties than to have a little of the fool, and not too much of the honest. Therefore extreme lovers of their country or masters, were never fortunate, neither can they be. For when a man placeth his thoughts without himself, he goeth not his own way.

This is wisdom, but assuredly not the wisdom from above.

> If affection lead a man to favour the wrong side in justice, let him rather use his countenance to compound the matter than to carry it. If affection lead a man to favour the less worthy in desert, let him do it without depraving or disabling the better deserver.

This is indeed the attitude of him who—

> Would not play false,
> And yet would wrongly win.

Although Bacon's Essays in form correspond to his definition of an essay as "a dispersed meditation," in substance they are concentrated wisdom. It is, therefore, needful that they should be pregnant and pithy. It is consequently difficult to find elaborate passages available for quotation. They cannot, like Emerson's, be criticised as discontinuous: but the transitions frequently appear abrupt, from no want of art in the writer, but simply because an artful concatenation of thoughts would have required many words, and destroyed the aphoristic character of the piece. The perfect success of the author's method is evinced by the number of phrases which have found their way into literature as familiar quotations, selected by a process no less conclusive as to the infallibility of the general judgment in the long run than as to the merit of the sayings themselves. Whatever is most familiar is also best:

> Revenge is a kind of wild justice.
>
> The pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon.
>
> It is the weaker sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers.

It is a sure sign of a worthy and generous spirit whom honour amends.

A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.

Money is like muck, not good except it be spread.

All rising to a great place is by a winding stair.

Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds, they ever fly to twilight.

It breeds great perfection if the practise be harder than the use.

God Almighty first planted a garden.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

A mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolors of death.

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.

A painter may make a better face than ever was; but he must do it by a kind of felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music) and not by rule.

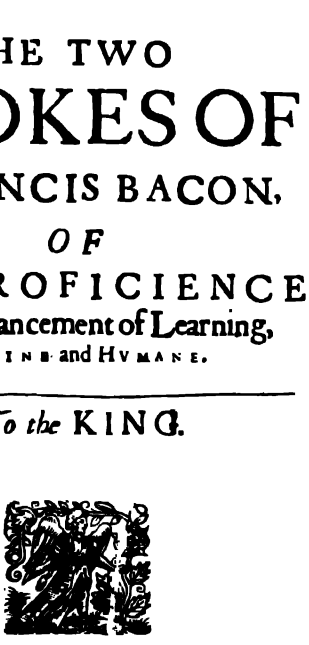
These latter remarks prove Bacon's insight into æsthetics to have been no less than his insight into moral and natural philosophy. It is to be regretted that he wrought so little in this department. His reading in Latin, French, and Italian literature seems to have been very extensive: but it may be doubted whether the modern poets of any nation were much in his hands, and he probably read Greek only in Latin translations, a great misfortune, as it would disable him from gaining any real acquaintance with the Greek drama. Had this been otherwise the drama might not have been such a dead letter to him, as, but for his frequent concern with masques and pageants, would seem to have been the case. He derives striking similes from theatrical representations, and it seems impossible that he should not have highly appreciated Ben Jonson, the bent of whose genius must have been so much to his own taste, with whom he had much familiar intercourse, and who would certainly expect the high estimation in which he himself held Bacon to be repaid in kind. There are nevertheless few symptoms of Bacon having realised the importance of the drama either as an intellectual achievement or as a social force. In his essay on Travel he does, indeed, advise the young voyager to attend, with many similar gatherings, the representation of comedies, but only "such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort;" and he evidently has chiefly in view the opportunities thus afforded for making acquaintances, and learning the language of the country.

The history of *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) is remarkable as that of a great and epoch-making book swallowed up in one more extensive, much as Wordsworth's Excursion would have disappeared as an independent poem if the author's design had been fully carried out. The republication, however, of *The Advancement of Learning* in 1623, greatly enlarged, under the title, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, is in Latin, and *The Advancement* still stands as the author's chief contribution to science in his native tongue. It consists of two parts, the nature and design of which are thus stated by the author himself:

The former concerning the excellency of learning and knowledge, and the excellency of the merit and true glory in the augmentation and propagation thereof, the latter, what the particular acts and works are which have been embraced and

undertaken for the advancement of learning, and again what defects and undervalues I find in such particular acts.

Bacon accordingly passes the condition of the various sciences in review, and his survey is most instructive. Some omissions, such as those of painting and music, were afterwards supplied in the *De Augmentis*, where he also expresses a less absolute satisfaction with mathematical science. The greatness of the book, however, consists in its being the first serious attempt to enthrone the empirical principle in natural philosophy. "Not," says Bacon's candid expositor, Dr. Fowler, "that the writers and teachers of his time had no recourse to the observation of facts at all, but that they only looked out for facts in support of preconceived theories, or constructed their theories on a hasty and unmethodical examination of a few facts collected at random." Experiment and observation could never be entirely neglected, but always had to give way when apparently at variance with the investigator's notions of the eternal fitness of things. "The handling of final causes," Bacon proclaimed, "hath intercepted the severe and diligent inquiry of all real and physical causes, to the great arrest and prejudice of further discovery." It may be safely affirmed that, next to the perfecting of scientific instruments, nothing has so greatly enlarged man's knowledge of the universe as the general adherence of natural philosophers to Bacon's method of investigation, compared with whose grandeur and fruitfulness the continual errors into which he fell in its application appear as nothing. Buddhism sums up all wisdom in "the Way," and natural science might imitate her.


THE TWO
BOOKES OF
Sr FRANCIS BACON,
OF
THE PROFICIENCE
and Advancement of Learning,
DIVINE and HVMANE.

To the KING.

OXFORD,
Printed by I. L. Printer to the Vniverſity, for
Thomas Huggins. 1633.

With permiſſion of B. Fiſher.

Title-page of "The Advancement of Learning," 1633

The noble and flowing periods of *The Advancement* exhibit Bacon's style at its best. He is no longer cramped by the need for pregnant conciseness as in the Essays. The following is from his scheme, partly executed by himself, for the improvement of English history:

> And if it shall seem that the greatness of this work may make it less exactly performed, there is an excellent period of a much smaller compass of time, as to the story of England; that is to say, from the Uniting of the Roses to the Uniting

of the Kingdom, a portion of time wherein, to my understanding, there hath been the rarest varieties that in like number of successions of any hereditary monarchy hath been known. For it beginneth with the mixed adeption of a crown by arms and title; an entry by battle, an establishment by marriage; and therefore times answerable like water after a tempest, full of working and swelling, though without extremity of storm; but well passed through by the wisdom of the pilot, being one of the most sufficient kings of all the number. Then followed the reign of a king whose actions, however conducted, had much intermixture with the affairs of Europe, balancing and inclining them variably; in whose time also began that great alteration in the State ecclesiastical, an action which seldom cometh upon the stage: then the reign of a minor; then an offer of an usurpation, though it was but *febris ephemera*: then the reign of a queen matched with a foreigner: then of a queen that lived solitary and unmarried, and yet her government so masculine as it had greater impression and operation upon the states abroad than it any ways received from thence: and now last, this most happy and glorious event that this Island of Britain, divided from all the world, should be united in itself; and that oracle of rest given to Æneas, *Antiquam exquirite matrem*, should now be performed and fulfilled upon the nations of England and Scotland, being now reunited in the ancient mother name of Britain as a full period of all instability and peregrination; so that as it cometh to pass in massive bodies, that they have certain trepidations and waverings before they fix and settle; so it seemeth that by the providence of God this monarchy, before it was to settle in your Majesty and your generations (in which I hope it is now established for ever) it had then prelusive changes and varieties.

"Novum Organum"

In the *Novum Organum*, which, being written in Latin, does not strictly fall within our province, Bacon returns in a measure to the aphoristic character of the Essays. "Maxims such as these," says Dr. Fowler, citing a few of the more remarkable, "live long in the memory, and insensibly influence the whole habit of thought. What Bacon says of Plato is pre-eminently true of himself; "he was a man of sublime genius, who took a view of everything as from a high rock." While, however, he had the genius to perceive the necessity of basing natural philosophy upon experiment, he attempted few experiments himself except such as were short and easy, and lacked the power of appreciating the researches of others. He disbelieved the Copernican theory; and failed to recognise the importance, not only of Gilbert's abstruse investigations in magnetism, but of Galileo's telescope, which must surely have captivated his imagination could he have known it otherwise than by report.

De Sapientia Veterum"

The *De Sapientia Veterum* (1609), though originally written in Latin, ranks among English books through the contemporary translation of Sir Arthur Gorges. It brought Bacon more immediate reputation than any of his works, except the Essays, but has little significance for the present age, being at most an ingenious attempt to educe imaginary meanings from classical myths.

The New Atlantis"

The New Atlantis may be regarded as an appendix to *The Advancement of Learning*, and at the same time as an attempt to present Bacon's ideas in a more popular form. It also aims at externalising them, and is thus the only example of Bacon's assuming the character of a creator, and depicting imaginary persons and things. The machinery, being the conception of the discovery of an unknown country by mariners driven out of their

course, invites comparison with *The Tempest*, and the parallel suffices to display the ludicrousness of the identification of Bacon with Shakespeare. Shakespeare waves his wand, and a new world starts up around him. Bacon transplants the world he knows to an imaginary locality. So little of the wild and wonderful is there in his work that one of the chief merits claimed for it is to have prefigured the institution of the Royal Society, and to have not improbably influenced its founders. Yet, if Bacon could not "pass the flaming bounds of Space and Time," he could work to excellent purpose within them, and his work is doubly interesting as a revelation of his own inner mind, and as a testimony of the strength of the enthusiasm which could impel so sedate a personage into fiction. It might not have been written but for the example of More's *Utopia*, to which, nevertheless, it presents an entire contrast. More's Utopia is ethical and political, Bacon's in its present fragmentary condition, for the moral sciences were never handled in it according to the author's original design, scientific. He had already established that the advancement of knowledge must come from the interrogation of Nature, and he now essays, by the example of an imaginary nation, to show how this may be conducted, more effectually, because systematically, than hitherto, under Government control. "Solomon's House, or the College of the Six Days' Works," is founded by the people of the New Atlantis "for the interpreting of nature, and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men." Whatever exception may be taken to details, the idea in itself is fine and fruitful, and eminently worthy of Bacon. The conduct ot the fiction, also, merits the praise of ingenuity, in so far as the difficulties incident to the existence of the New Atlantis, and the scientific proficiency of the inhabitants are avoided. The fragment was written between 1614 and 1617, as appears from allusions in Bacon's own manuscripts. It was first printed after his death.



Francis Bacon

After the portrait by Paul van Somer

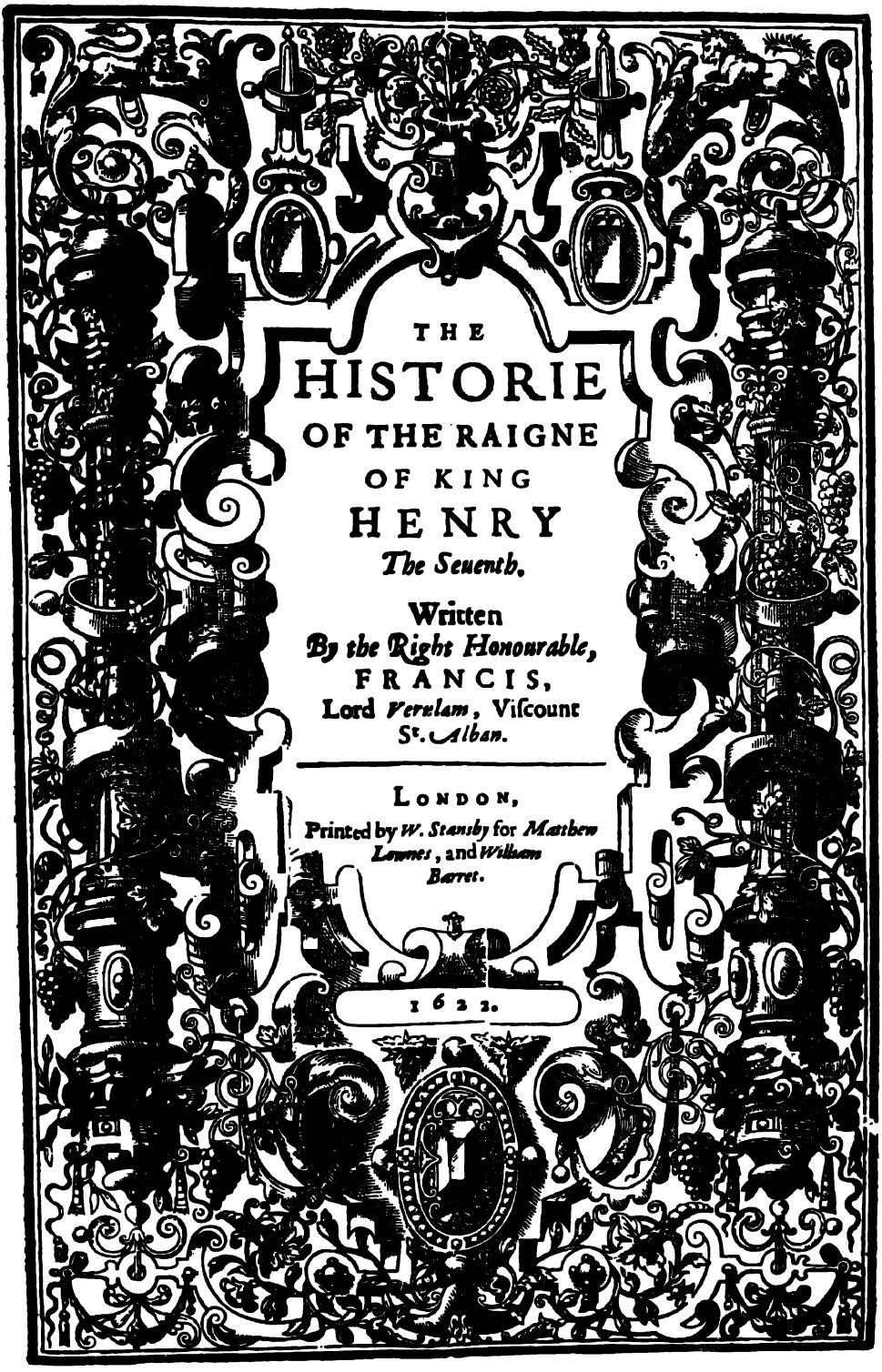
The following is a good specimen of the easy level narrative of *The New Atlantis*, as little like Shakespeare as can be conceived, but with a certain Defoe-like power of compelling credence:

> It came to pass that the next day, about evening, we saw within a kenning before us, to the north, as it were thick clouds, which did put us in some hope of land; knowing how that part of the South Sea was utterly unknown, and might have islands or continents that hitherto were not come to light. Wherefore we bent our course thither where we saw the appearance of land all that night; and in the dawning of the next day we might plainly discern that it was a land, flat to our sight, and full of boscage, which made it show the more dark. And after an hour and a half's sailing we entered into a good haven, being the port of a fair city; not great indeed but well built, and that gave a pleasant view from the sea: and we thinking every minute long till we were on land, came close to the shore, and offered to land. But straightway we saw divers of the people with bastons in their hands, as it were forbidding us to land; yet without any cries or fierceness, but only as warning us off by signs that they made. Wherefore, being not a little discomforted, we were advising with ourselves what we should do. During which time there made forth to us a small boat, with about eight persons in it; wherein one of them had in his hand a tipstaff of a yellow cane, tipped at both ends with blue, who came aboard on ship without any show of distrust at all. And when he saw one of our number present himself somewhat afore the rest, he drew forth a little scroll of parchment, somewhat yellower than our parchment, and shining like the leaves of writing-tables, but otherwise soft and flexible, and delivered it to our foremost man.

The New Atlantis was published in 1627, at the end of the *Sylva Sylvarum*, by Bacon's literary executor, Rawley. The recoverer of *Nova Solyma* points out its influence on that remarkable work, and it had several professed continuations. It seems to be ridiculed in Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*. For some reason not easily fathomed, satirists, from Aristophanes to Dickens, have usually been inimical to physical science. Rabelais is an exception.

he "History Henry II"

Bacon's political writings are numerous, and his historical compositions may be included among them. By much the most important of these is his *History of Henry VII.*, written, as we have seen, immediately after his disgrace in 1621. He had, no doubt, reason to know that the undertaking would be acceptable to James I., but there is no ground to suppose that he intended to idealise either James or himself in Henry: and, since we have seen that he had already indicated the history of England from the battle of Bosworth Field to the death of Elizabeth as an historical desideratum, it is most probable that he took advantage of his unwonted leisure to execute a favourite plan. The work does him the highest honour for its ease and breadth of execution, and perfect penetration of the motives of the leading actors. "He gives," says Bishop Nicholson, "as sprightly a view of the secrets of Henry's Council as if he had been president of it." It is entirely a political history, the life of a statesman by a statesman, and may in this respect be compared to the histories of Ranke, but is not, like these, based upon the evidence of State Papers. The author's complete knowledge of the period must have enabled him to dispense with documentary research, for, although minor errors have been discovered, such as attributing to Pope Alexander an action of his pre-



Title-page of Bacon's "History of the Reign of Henry VII.," 1622

decessor, no more recent writer has been able to vary Bacon's portrait of Henry to any appreciable extent. The tone is in general cool and unimpassioned, moral judgment remains in abeyance, and little use is made of the picturesque passages from the chroniclers, in which Shakespeare would have luxuriated; but the dryness which might have been the result of this sobriety is avoided by a frequent employment of quaint, brilliant, and striking metaphors and comparisons, some of which would in our day be thought below the dignity of history:

> She began to cast within herself for what coast this blazing star should first appear, and at what time.
>
> Upon the first grain of incense that was sacrificed upon the altar of peace at Bulloigne, Perkin was smoked away.
>
> These fames grew so general as the authors were lost in the generality of speakers; they being like running weeds that have no certain root, or like footings up and down impossible to be traced.
>
> For profit, it was to be made in two ways, upon his subjects for the war, and upon his enemies for the peace; like a good merchant that makes his gain both upon the commodities exported and imported back again.

The following is a good average specimen of Bacon's narrative:

> The King went forwards on his journey, and made a joyful entry into Exeter, where he gave the citizens great commendations and thanks; and taking his sword he wore from his side, he gave it to the Mayor, and commanded it should for ever after be carried before him. There also he caused to be executed some of the ringleaders of the Cornishmen, in sacrifice to the citizens, whom they had put in fear and trouble. At Exeter the King consulted with his counsel whether he should offer life to Perkin if he would quit the sanctuary and voluntarily submit himself. The counsel were divided in opinion. Some advised the King to take him out of sanctuary perforce, and put him to death, as in a case of necessity, which in itself dispenses with consecrated persons and things; wherein they doubted not also but the King should find the Pope tractable to ratify his deed, either by declaration or at least by indulgence. Others were of opinion, since all was now safe and no further hurt could be done, that it was not worth the exposing of the King to new scandal and envy. A third part fell upon the opinion that it was not possible for the King ever either to satisfy the world well touching the imposture or to learn out the bottom of the conspiracy, except by promise of life and pardon and other fair means he should get Perkin into his hands. But they did all in their preambles much bemoan the King's case, with a kind of indignation at his fortune; that a prince of his high wisdom and virtue should have been so long and so oft exercised and vexed with idols. But the King said that it was the vexation of God Almighty himself to be vexed with idols, and therefore that was not to trouble any of his friends: and that for himself he always despised them, but was grieved that they had put his people to such trouble and misery. But in conclusion he leaned to the third opinion; and so sent some to deal with Perkin; who seeing himself a prisoner and destitute of all hopes, having tried princes and peoples, great and small, and found all either false, faint, or unfortunate, did gladly accept of the condition. The King did also while he was at Exeter appoint the Lord Darcy and others commissions for the fining of all such as were of any value, and had any hand or partaking in the aid or comfort of Perkin or the Cornishmen, either in the field or in the flight. These commissions proceeded with such strictness and severity as did much obscure the King's mercy in the sparing of blood, with the bleeding of so much treasure. Perkin was brought unto the King's court, but not to the King's presence; though the King to satisfy his curiosity saw him sometimes out of a window or in passage. He was in show at liberty, but guarded with all the care and watch that was possible, and willed to follow the King to London. But fr

his first appearance on the stage in his new person of a sycophant or juggler, instead of his former person of a Prince, all men may think how he was exposed to the derision not only of the courtiers but also of the common people, who flocked about him as he went along, that one might know afar off where the owl was by the flight of the birds: some mocking, some wondering, some cursing, some prying matter out of his countenance and gesture to talk of. So that the false honour and respects which he had so long enjoyed was plentifully repaid in scorn and contempt. As soon as he was comen to London, the King gave also the city the solace of this may-game. For he was conveyed leisurely on horseback, but not in any ignominious fashion, through Cheapside and Cornhill to the Tower, and from thence back again unto Westminster, with the churme[1] of a thousand taunts and reproaches.

Shakespeare has depicted a similar situation to Perkin's in his *Richard II.*, and the contrast between his profuseness and Bacon's sobriety, as marked as that between *The New Atlantis* and *The Tempest*, should alone suffice to decide the so-called Baconian controversy. He who can believe the writer of all others most resplendent in thoughts and fancies to have here shone with so dry a light may well believe the rustic merry-making in *The Winter's Tale* to be the creation of one who lived entirely in cities. The prevalence, nevertheless, of this remarkable delusion justifies a few words upon what might otherwise have been passed over—Bacon's technical claims to the character of poet. That Shelley was justified in claiming this character for him in the largest sense is indisputable; his errors as a man of science are chiefly due to his sensitiveness to the picturesque aspects of the kingdom of nature. But, considered in the more restricted point of view as a practitioner of the poetical art, in which he must have excelled to have produced but one of the dramas of Shakespeare, his pretensions are but humble. The only poetical production that can with safety be attributed to him is a paraphrase of some of the Psalms, made in 1624, which enshrines with similar felicities this delectable couplet:

Bacon's paraphrase of the Psalms

> There hast thou set the great Leviathan,
> That makes the seas to seeth like boiling pan.

The writer who can not only perpetrate but print such a piece of bathos can have but scant claim to the quality of poet: while he may yet be able to express himself metrically with dignity and eloquence when his theme is entirely congenial to him. The following stanzas are from the paraphrase of the ninetieth Psalm:

> O God, thou art our home, to whom we fly,
> And so hast always been from age to age,
> Before the hills did intercept the eye,
> Or that the frame was up of earthly stage.
> O God, thou wert and art, and still shalt be:
> The line of time, it doth not measure thee.
>
> Both death and life obey thy holy lore,
> And visit in their turns as they are sent;
> A thousand years with thee, they are no more
> Than yesterday, which as it is, is spent:

[1] Confused noise.

Or like a watch by night, that course doth keep,
And goes and comes unwares to them that sleep.

Thou carriest man away as with a tide;
Then down swim all his thoughts that mounted high,
Much like a mocking dream that will not bide,
But flies before the sight of waking eye·
Or as the grass that cannot term obtain
To see the summer come about again.

Teach us O, Lord, to number well our days,
Thereby our hearts to wisdom to apply;
For that which guides man best in all his ways,
Is meditation of mortality.
This bubble light, this vapour of our breath,
Teach us to consecrate to hour of Death.

If this is not poetry of the highest order, it is something more than rhetoric in rhyme. But imagine the author of *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, with the First Folio under his hand, spending his time over a generally mediocre paraphrase of the Psalms!

Bacon's letters form an extensive collection. The most important are the elaborate considerations on affairs of state, drawn up in epistolary form for the enlightenment of rulers and public men: others refer merely to the events of the day. All are profoundly interesting, not so much on account of the particular themes as from the contact into which they bring us with Bacon himself. We see the man whose outlook is too wide for his time, and whose ideas have far outrun it, striving to obtain recognition by a policy of accommodation and suasion. In an age of liberty he might have led the Commons, and seated himself in power; in an age of civil discord he might have been chosen arbitrator by both parties; the condition of his own times left him no other part than that of a secret counsellor, commonly disregarded. The circumstances of his age also deprived him of much of his legitimate renown: as an English author writing for the world, and not for his own country alone, he was obliged to compose the most important of his works in Latin. Immense as was his service, immortal as was his meed, it was in him to have achieved and to have deserved much more. The identification of his person with the author of Shakespeare's plays, in itself an absurdity, acquires significance if regarded as an instinctive acknowledgment that, but for the faults of our ancestors, our debt to Bacon might have been even greater than it is, an awkward way of formulating the world's consciousness that, although Bacon laboured unremittingly throughout a life exceeding the average term of human existence, he is, nevertheless, an "inheritor of unfulfilled renown."

Before Francis Bacon had taken a leading place in the world's eye save as an advocate, the second great name in Elizabethan prose literature had accomplished his work and passed away. RICHARD HOOKER occupied by comparison a narrow sphere: he could not, like Bacon, bequeath his memory to foreign nations, while it was destined to be a precious possession

of his own. On the other hand, his work, regarded as a finished labour, is more complete and durable than Bacon's. Bacon communicated an immense impulse to human thought, destined to result in the greatest achievements, but his own actual achievements were inevitably full of imperfections. Hooker, taking a theme large indeed, but still enclosed by definite boundaries, so handled it that little remained to be added, and his work is the very last which any successor would dream of superseding. Though professedly a mere expositor of the principles of the Church of England, he has gained the authority of a legislator. His position in intellectual history is akin to that of the great Roman Jurists who, seeming to expound the law, made it: with the difference that while their abhorrence of ornament amounts to repulsiveness, Hooker is one of the greatest examples in our language of ample, stately, and musical expression. The man who erected such a monument for himself, and such a bulwark for his Church, was in his person so quiet and unpretentious that, but for the happy accident of an enthusiastic biographer, almost the only personal problem this "most learned, most humble, most holy man" would have bequeathed to the world might have been, Was he henpecked? In the succeeding age, however, Izaak Walton, a man deeply imbued with the genius of the Church of England, made it his business to retrieve the minor biographical records of what he regarded as her golden age: and Hooker, at the instance, as is said, of Archbishop Sheldon, received a large share of his attention. Biographer and theme could not be more perfectly in harmony: yet, as Walton's talent was in no sense creative, the charming portrait seems painted on very thin canvas.

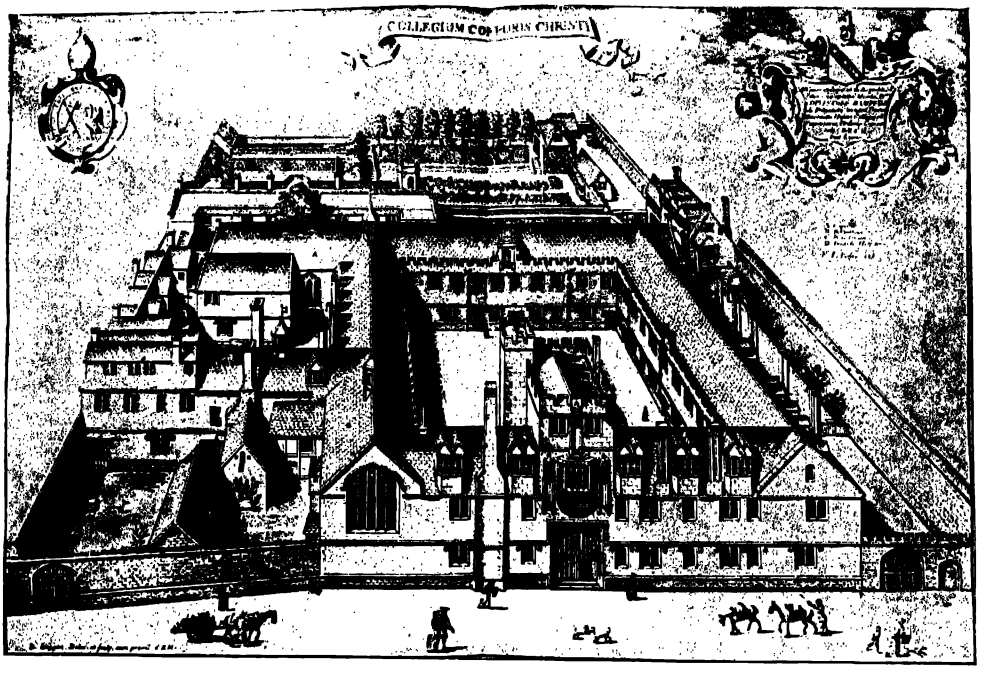


Richard Hooker
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

Life of Richard Hooker

Richard Hooker was born at Heavitree, near Exeter, probably in March 1554. The family name had originally been Vowell, and he was nephew to the Exeter antiquary, known by both appellations, who revised Holinshed's *Chronicles* and presided over Exeter Grammar School. Hooker, whose parents seem to have been poor, was educated by his uncle, and showed such promise that the latter brought him under the notice of Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, the champion of the Church of England in the Roman Catholic controversy, who bestowed a pension on his parents and obtained for the lad a clerkship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Richard's special abilities obtained for him a scholarship, irregularly bestowed as a mark of special distinction, he being beyond the statutable age. A Fellowship and a readership in Hebrew followed, and about 1581

Hooker took orders. Going up to London to preach at St. Paul's Cross, and arriving in a condition of exhaustion from fatigue and wet, he was nursed by his landlady into recovery, but less fortunately into a marriage with her daughter, the only person, the good lady declared, who could possibly take care of him. Without adopting all Walton's statements to the disadvantage of this lady, she appears to have been but an unsympathetic mate for her studious husband, who was shortly afterwards discovered by two of his former pupils at his country parsonage of Drayton-Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, alternately tending sheep and rocking the cradle. Being persons of influence, the young men procured

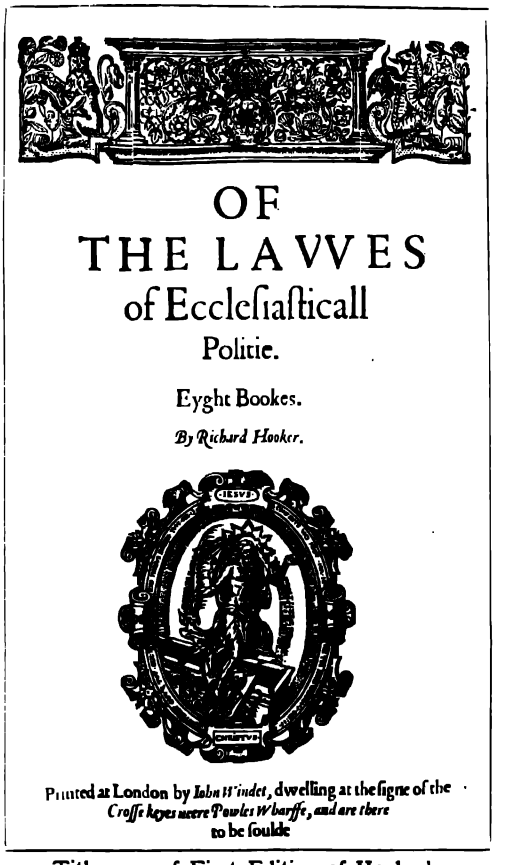


Corpus Christi College, Oxford

From Loggan's "Oxonia Illustrata," 1675

for him no less preferment than that of the mastership of the Temple Church, where he became involved in a vehement though not irate controversy with Travers, the afternoon lecturer. "The pulpit," says Fuller, "spoke Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon." In 1591 Hooker, "weary of the noise and opposition of the place," received the living of Boscombe in Wiltshire, and in 1595 that of Bishopsbourne near Canterbury, to allow him leisure to compose his great work, *The Ecclesiastical Polity*, half of which was written in Wiltshire, and which was left incomplete at his death. Walton depicts him at Bishopsbourne as "an obscure harmless man, a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a close gown or canonical coat; of a mean stature and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul; his body worn out not with age but with study and holy mortifications; his face full of heat pimples he got by his inactivity and sedentary life." The characteristic most

evident to ordinary observation seems to have been his extreme bashfulness, which injured his effectiveness as a preacher. "His voice was low, stature little, gesture none at all, standing stone still in the pulpit." His patience and gentleness in controversy, virtues unusual in that age, sufficiently attest his amiability; he did not suffer his studies to interfere with the less congenial duties of a country clergyman; and his respect for law is characteristically shown by his insistence with his parishioners to preserve their rights by annually beating their bounds. He died on November 2, 1601, after a month's illness. "In this time of his sickness and not many days before his death, his house was robbed; of which he having notice, his question was, 'Are my books and written papers safe?' And being answered that they were, his reply was, 'Then it matters not, for no other loss can trouble me.'"


OF
THE LAVVES
of Eccleſiaſticall
Politie.

Eyght Bookes.

By Richard Hooker.

Printed at London by Iohn Windet, dwelling at the ſigne of the Croſſe keyes neere Powles Wharffe, and are there to be ſoulde

Title-page of First Edition of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity"

The first edition of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is not dated, but, having been licensed in January 1593, may probably have appeared in the course of that year. It contained the first four books only, with a promise of four more to follow. The fifth book, published in 1597, is larger than all its predecessors put together. The three remaining books did not appear until the middle of the century, and it seems certain that they were not finished compositions, but put together from the author's notes, and that the sixth book does not properly belong to the *Ecclesiastical Polity* at all. Whether he left the books in a complete form, and they were destroyed by his wife's Puritan relations, is a matter of controversy. Such, according to Walton, was his widow's confession to Archbishop Whitgift, and the assertion was made positively in the preface to the edition of the first five books published in 1604. On the other hand, the illegible penmanship which, according to a sorrowing schoolmaster of the seventeenth century, prevented the publication of Hooker's manuscript sermons, may have had something to do with the matter. Perhaps, when Mrs. Hooker's kinsmen assured her that her husband's posthumous writings "were not fit to be read,"

they only meant that they could not read them. Nor were the Puritans the only suspected parties. Hooker's moderation in advocating the claims of episcopacy, and the liberality of his sentiments respecting the royal power, were distasteful to High Church and high prerogative men in his own age and ever since, and as the text of the seventh and eighth books in which these subjects are discussed has been prepared, probably by Bishop Gauden, from a number of manuscript copies, what was mutilated in the interest of one party may have been interpolated in that of another.

Hooker, like the Church he adorned and defended, is a remarkable instance of greatness depending upon the equilibrium of qualities apparently contradictory. As a general rule, mastery of a grand style of composition is found in union with vehemence, not to say intemperance, both of character and diction. Here, however, the finest prose writer of his age is so remote from excess of word or thought that the epithet which especially marks him out for posterity is not the eloquent but the judicious Hooker. As the champion of the Church of England he might have been expected to have been before all things a theologian; a theologian indeed he is, but he is even more of a philosopher. The first three books of his treatise are occupied with a profound investigation of the law of the universe, which the Puritans identified with the revelation of the Scriptures. Hooker maintained that the law was the law of nature, to which the Scriptural was merely supplementary. The bearing upon current church controversies was obvious; for if Hooker was right, the discipline and ceremonies of the Church of England could not be rejected merely for want of direct Scriptural authority in their favour. The first three books, in which this argument is expounded, may be regarded as a great treatise on natural law. The third book contends that no system of Church government is enacted in Scripture, but that regard must be had to utility and the authority of antiquity. The remainder of the work, directed to the special vindication of the Church of England on the points on which it was especially criticised by Romanists and Puritans, is of less general interest, but was of more practical importance for his own generation. Ceremonies, Presbyterianism, Episcopacy came necessarily under review: and in the last book Hooker



Archbishop Whitgift
After an engraving by G. Vertue

treats of the subject which he has made most peculiarly his own, the Royal Supremacy. Generally speaking, his efforts in this part of his treatise are directed to show that the compromise between conflicting tendencies which wisdom and policy had effected at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign was not merely a temporary makeshift, but was in accordance with sound principle and right reason. In the course of time, Hooker's work has become more acceptable to the representatives of those against whom he wrote than to many of the representatives of those who in his own day applauded him: but amid all fluctuations of sentiment he will remain the chief doctor of the Church of England so long as she makes it her maxim to maintain a position equally remote from Rome and Geneva.

The style of Hooker is in signal contrast to whatever has been recorded respecting the personality of the man. The most remarkable characteristic of the author is represented to have been humility, the leading characteristic of his style is indubitably grandeur. He ranks among the very greatest masters of English prose. Less perspicuous than Bacon, he is even more dignified; less overwhelming than Milton, he does not, like Milton, trench on the domain of poetry. Like Burke and Ruskin, he has the art of placing himself at a great height without the semblance of effort, and maintaining himself there as long as pleases him. His diction is certainly too Latinised, but he is treating of subjects usually discussed in Latin, and the atmosphere which surrounds him is one of scholarship. His sentences are frequently long and involved, but they never want logic, and seldom harmony. Like all great writers he rises with his theme, and appears to more advantage in declaring what Themis is than in debating what she enjoins:



Pope Clement VIII. One of the greatest admirers of Hooker's style

From an engraving

> Moses in describing the work of Creation attributeth speech unto God: "God said, let there be light; let there be a firmament; let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place; let the earth bring forth; let there be lights in the firmament of heaven." Was this the only intent of Moses, to signify the infinite greatness of God's power by the easiness of his accomplishing such effects, without travail, pain, or labour? Surely it seemed that God had herein besides this a further purpose, namely, first, to teach that God did not work as a necessary but as a voluntary agent, intending beforehand and decreeing with himself that which did outwardly proceed from him; secondly, to show that God did then institute a law natural to be observed by creatures, and therefore, according to the manner of laws, the institution thereof is described as being established by

solemn injunction. His commanding those things to be which are, and to be in such sort as they are, to keep that tenor and course which they do, importeth the establishment of Nature's law. This world's first creation, and the preservation since of things created, what is it but only so far forth a manifestation by execution, what the eternal law of God is concerning things natural? And as it cometh to pass in a kingdom rightly ordered that after a law is once published it presently takes effect far and wide, all states framing themselves thereunto; even so let us think it fareth in the natural course of the world; since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts of his law upon it, heaven and earth have hearkened unto his voice, and their labour hath been to do his will. He made a law for the rain, he gave his decree unto the sea that the waters should not pass his commandment. Now if Nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which they now have; if the frame of the heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way; the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disorder and confused mixture; the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mothers, no longer able to yield them relief; what would become of man himself, whom all these things do now serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world?



Lady Mary Dudley, wife of Sir Henry Sidney and mother of Sir Philip Sidney

It will be observed how Hooker gathers fire and strength as he proceeds, until what began as an argument ends as a dithyramb, yet remaining noble prose. It is not usual to find such reverence for law in divines, and his argument admitted of being extended to lengths which he never contemplated. Any natural philosopher might have subscribed his final testimony to the supremacy of law, but few could have expressed it with equal majesty.

Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from



Sir Philip Sidney.

AFTER THE MINIATURE BY ISAAC OLIVER IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

her power; both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

The following exposition of the rational grounds of ceremonial usages in worship is an excellent example of Hooker's dexterous manner of urging a point peculiarly distasteful to his adversaries:

The end that is aimed at in setting down the outward form of all religious actions is the edification of the Church. Now men are edified when either their understanding is taught somewhat whereof in such actions it behoveth all men to consider, or when their hearts are moved with any affection suitable thereunto; when their minds are in any sort stirred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention, and due regard which in these cases seemeth requisite. Because therefore unto their purpose not only speech, but sundry sensible means besides have always been thought necessary, and especially those means which being object to the eye, the liveliest and most apprehensive sense of all other, have in that respect seemed the fittest to make a deep and a strong impression: from hence have risen not only a number of prayers, readings, questionings, exhortings, but even of visible signs also; which being used in the performance of holy actions, are undoubtedly most effectual to open such matter, as men whom they know and remember carefully, must needs be a great deal the better informed to what effect such duties serve. We must not think but that there is some ground of reason even in nature, whereby it cometh to pass that no nation under heaven either doth or ever did suffer public actions which are of weight, whether they be civil and temporal or else spiritual and sacred, to pass without some visible solemnity: the very strangeness whereof and difference from that which is common doth cause popular eyes to observe and mark the same. Words, both because they are common, and do not so strongly move the fancy of man, are for the most part but slightly heard; and therefore with singular wisdom it hath been provided that the deeds of men which are made in the presence of witnesses should pass not only with words, but also with certain sensible actions, the memory of which is far more easy and durable than the memory of speech can be.



Sir Henry Sidney

After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

PHILIP SIDNEY, of whom we propose to treat third in the list of illustrious Elizabethan writers, does not, regarded merely as a man of letters, stand nearly on the level of Bacon and Hooker. The ages have left their renown unimpaired, while Sidney was quickly outstripped on his threefold walk as poet, romancer, and essayist. Yet he is as characteristic a figure as they, and one whose part, while he lived to perform it, seemed more brilliant and

Philip

attractive than theirs. He is the representative of that union of courtly and literary accomplishment which, while not peculiar to England in Elizabeth's time, is still a special note of her reign. It shines in Raleigh



Sir Henry Sidney's return to Dublin after a victory

Derrick's "Image of Ireland," 1581

and in many a lesser man, but in Sidney alone does it seem to attain its ideal perfection. To support such a character on the intellectual side, the person must give some proof of intellectual accomplishment, and we find



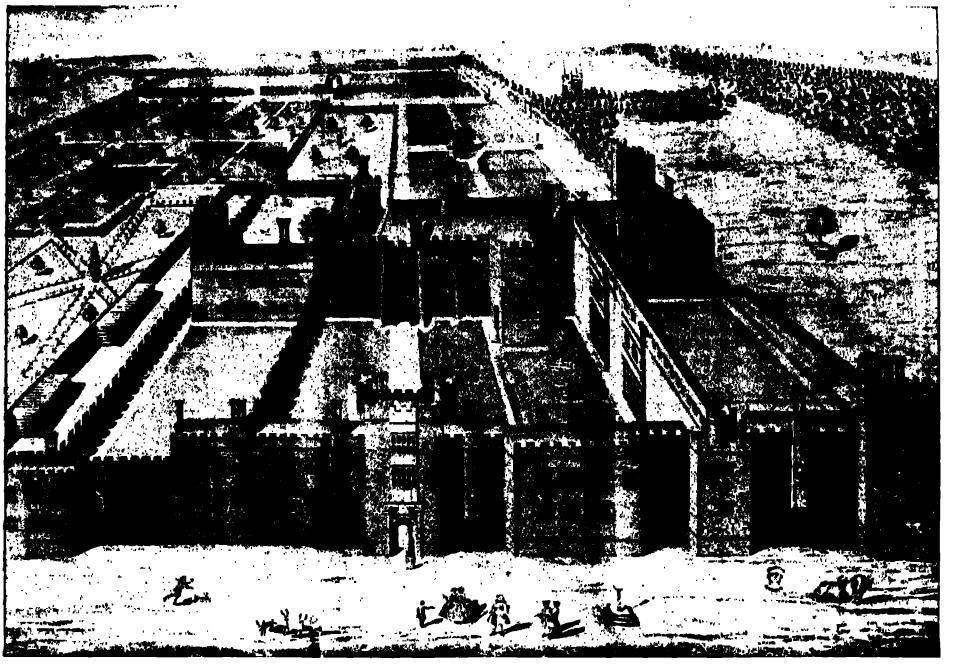
An Irish Chief's last fight

Derrick's "Image of Ireland," 1581

Sidney's writings far transcending the merely necessary standard, no mere literary exercises, but standing in a more intimate relation to the writer than can be asserted of most of the work of that time. They are the productions of a man of most distinct vocation, who might, or might not, have performed greater things, but did enough to make himself in letters, as in arms, the

most distinguished representative of a class that lives for us in the drama of the age; but which, so ideally fascinating is it, we might, but for Sidney and men like him, suspect of having existed mainly in the imaginations of the poets. Sidney again, though somewhat younger than both Raleigh and Hooker, has the advantage of coming first in order of time among the great Elizabethan authors, of prefiguring both by example and precept many things yet in the future, and thus being endowed with something of the character of a hierophant.

The cavalier in Sidney was hereditary, the poet was the gift of the gods. His parentage was illustrious; his father, Sir Henry Sidney, afterwards three times



Penshurst

From an engraving by George Vertue

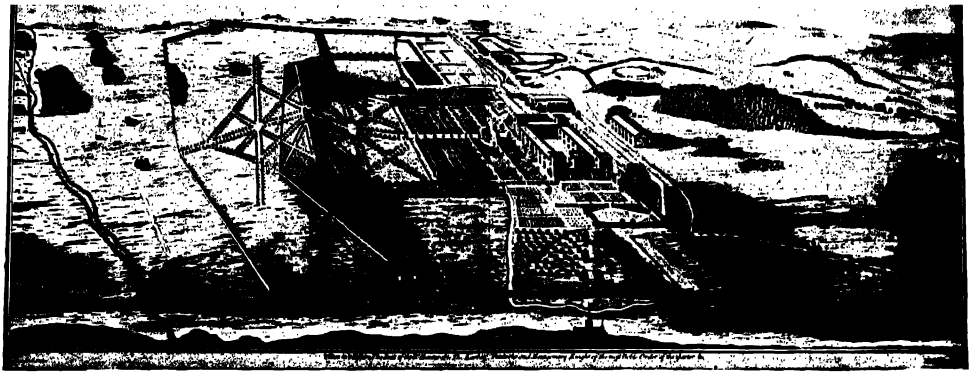
Lord Deputy of Ireland, was one of the first statesmen and soldiers of his time; his mother was the daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who for a few days made himself all but king; and his Christian name came from the King of Spain, his godfather. He was born at the family seat, Penshurst, on November 30, 1554. The accident of his father's holding the office of Lord President of the Welsh Marches caused him to be partly educated at Shrewsbury Grammar School, where he received letters of advice from his parent, most admirable in themselves, but which would seem fit for a much older person. Yet they do not seem to have been in advance of Sidney's precocity. Like Bacon, so dissimilar in most other respects, he was distinguished in boyhood by a sweet sedateness. " Though," writes his biographer Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, his schoolfellow at Shrewsbury and friend throughout his life, " though I lived

with him and knew him from a child, I never knew him other than a man; with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years; his talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind." After spending three years at Oxford, Sidney, like Bacon, went to Paris and lived at the English Embassy, but not like Bacon in a diplomatic capacity. He was greatly caressed by the French court, Charles IX. actually making him a gentleman of his bedchamber, but all that he saw confirmed his attachment to Protestantism, which could not but be increased by the atrocious massacre of St. Bartholomew, of which he was himself an appalled witness. Hastening from the scene of carnage, he made his way to Germany, where he became acquainted with the eminent Protestant divine, Languet, whose correspondence with him is full of interest. He spent a long time in Italy, chiefly at Venice; visited Austria, Hungary, and Poland; and, notwithstanding his youth, is said to have received and declined an offer of the elective crown of the latter country. Much of his time was spent in study, much in amateur diplomacy or writing letters on Continental affairs to Burghley or his uncle Leicester. He returned to England in June 1575. For some years, except for service with his father in Ireland and a mission to Germany in which he endeavoured to bring about a league among Protestant princes, Sidney remained at court, one of its chief ornaments, and the patron of men of every kind of desert, among whom Spenser is especially to be named. At the beginning of 1580 his loyal and patriotic opposition to Elizabeth's preposterous idea (if her encouragement of it was anything more than a pretence) of marrying the Duke of Anjou, caused him to be banished from court for a time. He retired to Wilton, and wrote the *Arcadia* for, perhaps in some measure with, his sister, the subject of the famous epitaph disputed between Ben Jonson and William Browne. Hence its title, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia.* It was first published in 1590. The poetry in this famous romance is made to order, and inserted in compliance with prescription, but the practice



Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke
After the portrait attributed to Mark Gheeraedts

it conferred probably helped Sidney when, the next year, true poetry was drawn from him by the marriage of Lady Penelope Devereux, to whom he had regarded himself as in some sense betrothed, to Lord Rich. Sidney's feeling does not seem to have been previously very ardent; one cannot help suspecting that he could have dropped the lady without much agitation, but to be dropped by her was quite another matter. Piqued into passion, he forgot for a time the strictness of principle which had previously guided him, and composed the sonnets of *Astrophel to Stella* (first published in 1591), the best of which are truly impassioned, and may be compared with a remarkable sonnet-cycle of our own time, *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*. Lady Rich's subsequent history says little for her morality, but she had no mind to compromise herself, and in 1583 Sidney contracted a happy marriage with the daughter of Secretary Walsingham. In the same year, though there is no good evidence of the date, he may have written his *Defence* or *Apology of Poetry*



View of Wilton House in Wiltshire, where Sidney wrote the "Arcadia"

(published 1598), composed in the spirit of a knight errant who seeks to liberate a captive princess. As Sidney admits, poetry had not yet attained that degree of splendour in England which would have rendered defence unnecessary. In the following year he became intimate with Giordano Bruno, a man of many failings, but the one man in Europe who had discerned the stupendous intellectual consequences of the Copernican theory. Sidney, who had studied astronomy in Italy, must have been deeply interested, and his sympathy with the Italian refugee may have contributed to the more ardent part he began to take in matters of State. He vehemently urged an attack on Spain, but, when an expedition to the Low Countries was determined upon, accepted a command under his uncle Leicester. It is needless to repeat the story of his heroic fate at Zutphen, just as he was giving the highest proofs of capacity as statesman and soldier. A wound, due to his own romantic but mistaken spirit of chivalry, resulted in his death on October 17, 1586. The mournful pageant of his funeral procession in the following February remained unrivalled by any similar public display until the funeral of Nelson. "It was accounted a sin for months afterwards for any gentleman of quality to wear gay apparel in London." In Sidney, indeed, Elizabethan literature had lost its morning star; and arts, arms, and politics their Admirable Crichton.

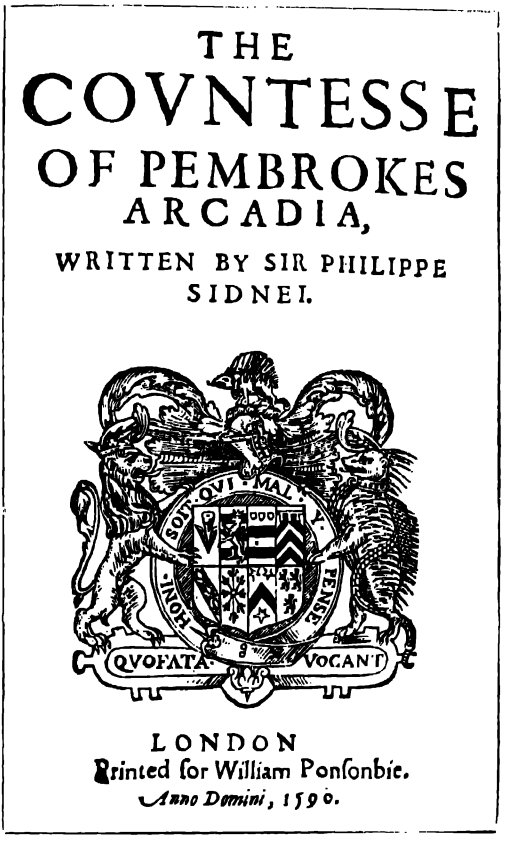
In the *Arcadia* Sidney shows what he might have done for literature had not his time (most justifiably in his case, his rank in the State considered) been so largely claimed by Courts and camps. In his one brief interval of disgrace and withdrawal from court the activity of his mind, stimulated by his sister's companionship and, perhaps, aided by her pen, sufficed to produce this folio volume, the English counterpart of the pastorals of Sannazaro and Montemayor. As such, it necessarily occupies a commanding position in English literature, and although a most faulty performance, its very faults are the paradoxical condition of its merits. Its great fault of being far too long was no fault in that age of leisure, and signifies little in an age when, if ever so much abbreviated, it still would not be read. On the contrary, this diffuseness is a gain to modern readers, who, feeling themselves dispensed from the obligation of mastering so intricate a plot and contending with so superhuman a discursiveness, simply wander through it like wayfarers through a forest, intent solely upon gathering flowers. These abound, though a large proportion must be classed with flowers of speech in the less favourable sense, and Sidney fatigues like Matho[1] by the effort after perpetual glitter. This has been attributed to the influence of Lyly, but with all his affectation his style falls far short of euphuism, and the attempt to dignify familiar and especially pastoral subjects by high-flown speech is as old as the Greek romancers, and is very conspicuous in Boccaccio. Sidney offends rather by the constancy of this endeavour than by positive extravagance of diction; a less continuous and obtrusive deflection from ordinary speech would have been even acceptable, as reminding us that we are and are meant to be denizens of an ideal world. The following, one of many beautiful descriptions, evinces how well Sidney could depict what he had himself seen and known. He was a consummate horseman, the *Defence of Poetry* begins with the celebration of his Italian riding-master. No doubt he had often "witched the world with noble horsemanship," as Dorus witches Pamela:



Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester
After the portrait by Zuccero

[1] Omnia vis belle Matho dicere; dic aliquando
Vel bene; dic neutrum; dic aliquando male.

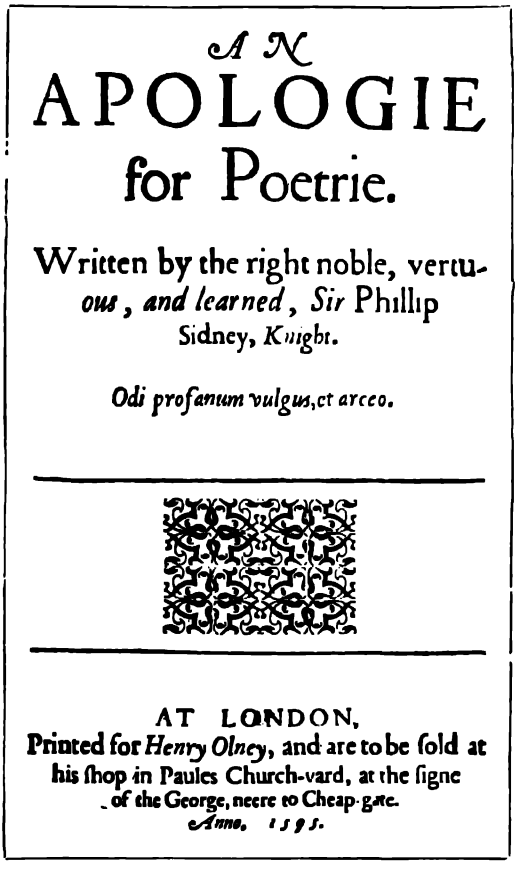
He stayed till I caused Mopsa bid him do something upon his horse; which no sooner said, than with a kind rather of quick gesture than show of violence, you might see him come towards me, beating the ground in so due time as no dancer can observe better measure. If you remember the ship we saw once when the sea went high upon the coast of Argos, so went the beast. But he, as if centaur like he had been one piece with the horse, was no more moved than one with the going of his own legs; and in effect so did he command him as his own limbs: for though he had both spurs and wand, they seemed rather marks of sovereignty than instruments of punishment, his hand and leg, with most pleasing grace, commanding without threatening, and rather remembering than chastising; at least if sometimes he did, it was so stolen as neither our eyes could discern it, nor the horse with any change did complain of it: he ever going so just with the horse, either forthright or turning, that it seemed as he borrowed the horse's body, so he lent the horse his mind. In the turning one might perceive the bridle hand somewhat gently stir; but indeed so gently, as it did rather distil virtue, than use violence. Himself, which methinks is strange, showing at one instant both steadiness and nimbleness; sometimes making him turn close to the ground like a cat, when scratchingly she wheels about after a mouse: sometimes with a little move rising before; now like a raven leaping from ridge to ridge, then like one of Dametas' kids bound over the hillocks; and all so done as neither the lusty kind showed any roughness, nor the easier any idleness, but still like a well obeyed master, whose beck is enough for a discipline, ever concluding each thing he did with his face to me-wards, as if thence came not only the beginning, but the ending of his motions.



Title-page of Sidney's "Arcadia," 1590

It would be fatiguing to unravel the plot of the *Arcadia*, intricate and remote from the possibilities of life as those of the Greek and Italian romances upon which it is modelled, and pestered with episodes, as the solar system with comets. The characters excite no very lively interest, but are appropriate to their chivalric and pastoral surroundings. The book can never again be popular, but neither can it ever be forgotten; and a judicious abridgment might even now be a literary success. Most of the poetry would in such a case disappear, as too palpably artificial and mechanical, although it is impossible not to admire the intellectual energy and command of language

which could produce so much really good writing to order, frequently in interesting though unsuccessful experiments, probably made under the influence of Gabriel Harvey, in the introduction of classical metres into English, and the naturalisation of foreign forms like the *terza rima* and the *sestine*. Sometimes a genuine blossom of song is encountered among the artificial flowers:


AN
APOLOGIE
for Poetrie.

Written by the right noble, vertuous, and learned, Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight.

Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.

AT LONDON,
Printed for Henry Olney, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in Paules Church-yard, at the ſigne of the George, neere to Cheap-gate.
Anno. 1595.

Title-page of Sidney's "Apology for Poetry," 1595

Get hence, fond Grief, the canker of the mind:
Farewell complaint, the miser's[1] only pleasure:
Away, vain Cares, by which few men do find
Their sought for treasure.

You helpless sighs, blow out your breath to nought:
Fears, drown yourselves for woe your cause is wasted:
Thought, think to end; too long the fruit of thought
My mind hath tasted.

But thou, sure Hope, tickle my leaping heart:
Comfort, step thou in place of wonted sadness:
Fore-felt Desire, begin to savour part
Of coming gladness.

Let voice of sighs into clear music run:
Eyes, let your tears with gazing be now mended:
Instead of Thought, true Pleasure be begun,
And never ended.

The genuineness of the feeling in *Astrophel and Stella* has been a subject of discussion, but Mr. Symonds and Mr. Courthope, who represent opposite views on this question, agree that the sonnets must have been written after the marriage of Penelope Devereux, the object of Sidney's too Platonic attachment, to Lord Rich, and consequently must have an autobiographic basis. This seems sufficiently clear from internal evidence. Sonnet 33, for example, manifestly expresses Sidney's remorse for having failed to win the lady's hand while it was yet to be won:

I might!—unhappy now!—O me, I might
And then would not, or could not, see my bliss;
Till now, wrapt in a most infernal night,
I find how heavenly day, wretch! I did miss.
Heart, rend thyself, thou dost thyself but right;

[1] Wretch.

No lovely Paris made thy Helen his:
No force, no fraud, robbed thee of thy delight,
Nor fortune of thy fortune author is.
But to myself myself did give the blow.
While too much wit, forsooth, so troubled me,
That I respects for both our sakes must show:
And yet could not by rising morn foresee
How fair a day was near: O punished eyes,
That I had been more foolish, or more wise!

Sonnet 87, with its speech of duty, affords conclusive proof of Stella having been a married, or at least a betrothed, woman:

When I was forced from Stella ever dear—
Stella, food of my thoughts, heart of my heart—
Stella, whose eyes make all my tempests clear—
By Stella's laws of duty to depart;
Alas! I found that she with me did smart;
I saw that tears did in her eyes appear;
I saw that sighs her sweetest lips did part,
And her sad words my sadded sense did hear.
For me, I wept to see pearls scattered so;
I sighed her sighs, and wailed for her woe;
Yet swam in joy, such love in her was seen.
Thus while the effect most bitter was to me,
And nothing than the cause more sweet could be,
I had been vexed, if vexed I had not been.

If any doubt could remain, it should be sufficient to weigh the poetical merit of the Stella sonnets, addressed to the heroine of a real history, against the mere elegance of the verse of the *Arcadia*, composed to comply with a convention. In *Astrophel and Stella* Sidney appears for the first time as a true poet, and far in advance of any predecessor in his own line. It does not thence follow that his passion was of a very intense character. It was genuine while it lasted, but gratification would soon have killed it, and even disappointment could not long keep it alive. It never forbids his helping himself out with an appropriation from a French or Italian poet, or turning aside to mere ingenuities, like the following exceedingly pretty but exceedingly palpable conceit:



Initial Letter from Sidney's "Arcadia," 1590

Morpheus, the lively son of deadly Sleep,
Witness of life to them that living die,
A prophet oft, and oft an history,
A poet eke, as humours fly or creep;
Since thou in me so sure a power dost keep,

That never I with closed-up sense do lie,
But by thy work my Stella I descry,
Teaching blind eyes both how to smile and weep;
Vouchsafe, of all acquaintance, this to tell,
Whence hast thou ivory, rubies, pearl and gold,
To show her skin, lips, teeth and head so well?
Fool! answers he, no Indes such treasures hold;
But from thy heart, while my sire charmeth thee,
Sweet Stella's image do I steal to me.

Sidney at his best, it will be admitted, is in the sonnet no unworthy



Map and View of the Town of Zutphen, the scene of Sidney's death

forerunner of Shakespeare. Had he bent himself to acclimatise the Petrarchan form of the sonnet he might have been a precursor of Milton also. It will be noticed that the form of sonnet he employs frequently approaches that of Spenser, who begins each quatrain with a rhyme to the last line of the quatrain preceding, in attempting a compromise between the Petrarchan sonnet and the characteristically English succession of three quatrains concluding with a couplet. He clearly recognised the superiority of the Petrarchan form, and would probably have adopted it if he had been able to overcome its difficulties. Yet it is hardly a matter for regret that he shrunk from the attempt; or while the Petrarchan form is far more artistic, and fitter for the expression of a single grave or graceful thought, the more rapid flow of the English sonnet often adapts it better for the expression of simple but earnest feeling.

Form of Sidney's Sonnets

Had Sidney set the example Shakespeare might have followed it, and it is doubtful whether his sonnets would have gained by being Petrarchised.

Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* is a remarkable essay, not a model of close consecutive reasoning, but undertaken in a spirit of love and devotion to what the author has himself found precious, and hence itself in some sort a poem. Sidney does not confine poetry to metrical composition. "It is not riming and versing that maketh poetry. One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry." Poetry is with him the antithesis of Philistinism, and denotes whatever elevates and purifies the mind, and casts an ideal hue over life. The poet is to him the great enchanter. "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as many poets have



A portion of the great Procession at the Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney

From Lant's "Sequitur Celebritas Pompa Funeris," 1587

done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden." From his own experience of the effects of poetry he relates: "Certainly I must confess my own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I felt not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is a song sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?" He admits the inferiority of English poetry to that of other polite nations, and ascribes it to want of encouragement: "That poetry thus embraced in all other places, should only find in our time a hard welcome in England, I think, the very

earth lamenteth it, and therefore decketh our soil with fewer laurels than it was accustomed." The fault is not in the language, whose fitness for poetry Sidney proclaims with no less eloquence than truth. He speaks, nevertheless, with high commendation of Sackville's *Gorboduc*, and encouragingly of Spenser's early efforts. The greatest distinction of Chaucer seems to have escaped him, though, if the *Canterbury Tales* were, in general, too familiar for his taste, the *Knight's Tale* could hardly fail to attract him. *Troilus and Creseyde*, however, is his favourite. "Excellently is his *Troilus and Creseide*, of whom truly I know not whether to marvel more that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him." In Surrey also, in so many respects his own counterpart, Sidney finds "many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind." The weakest part of his criticism is that on dramatic poetry: he disapproves of the mingling of tragedy and comedy to which the drama was to owe its regeneration, and would have confined it, like the drama of Italy, to the narrow limits traced by classical precedent. No doubt the English drama as then performed was infinitely shocking to a refined taste, and the prodigious development it was to receive within ten years was not in mortal to foresee. In so far, moreover, as Sidney is merely a literary critic he writes as the disciple of the Italians; it is only when, transcending technical rules, he concerns himself with ideas, that he finds his veritable self.

Little as Sidney is of a utilitarian, the practical importance of poetry is strenuously asserted by him:

> Now therein of all sciences I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice every man to enter into it. Nay he doth as if your journey should be through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness. But he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner, and, by pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue.

The exact date of Sidney's tractate is uncertain, but from the mention of Spenser's first poetical attempts it must be later than 1578: and as he professes to undertake it in the character of a poet, it may probably have been written after the *Arcadia* and *Astrophel and Stella* had given him an unquestionable claim to this designation. It seems to have been prompted by indignation at the attacks upon poetry made by Stephen Gosson in 1579; but Gosson, who had impudently dedicated his libel to Sidney himself, would scarcely have escaped castigation by name if Sidney had written in the first flush of resentment.

Sir Walter Raleigh

With Sidney, SIR WALTER RALEIGH ranks among the four great prose-writers of the Elizabethan age. As is so frequently the case with illustrious

Flushing Aug.t 14. 1586

Right honorable my singular good Lord
I humbli beseech your L.p to vouchsafe
the hearing of Burna in what
case for all sort of munition we
are in this town. I think sir Thomas
Cecill bee in the like I fear
exceedingly - in your Lps honorable care
thereof. The places being of
manner of Ive be turned unto
the States it is as good as
nothing, and it shall be no loss
to her Ma.ti to have som shire
under an officer of her own. whom it
shall please her. not to be spent but
upon urgent necessity the garrison
is weak. the people by the[m] cross
fancies crossly disposed, and this is
conclusion. if these 2. places be kept
her Ma.t hath wherwithal her money
on all extremities, if these should be lost
more of the rest wold hold a day

I wryte in great hast to your L because the ship can stay no longer, which I beseech your L consider and pardon, and vouchsafe to hold me in your favour as I am prest to call for your long and prosperous life [illegible] this 17 of August 1580

Your Lps most
humble at commandment

Ph. Sidney

contemporaries, these great men present both close parallels and vivid contrasts, but each is a characteristic representative of his time. Sidney, however, rather mirrors the ideal of the age, Raleigh its actual condition; for the former, Shelley's impassioned eulogium, "sublimely mild, a spirit without spot," scarcely seems too bold; while Raleigh, with the highest qualities of the soldier, the statesman, and the gentleman, incarnates the suppleness of the courtier and the unscrupulousness of the adventurer as well. Regarding them simply as men of letters, it appears remarkable that the more original part should have been allotted to the less original mind. Sidney is an innovator and almost a legislator in the romance, the sonnet, and the literary essay. Raleigh follows old paths in composition, and his works are chiefly distinguished by superior merit of execution.

Raleigh was born in or about 1552, at Hayes, near Budleigh Salterton, Devon. His father was a country gentleman, whose property lay near Plymouth; his mother, widow of Otho Gilbert, was mother by her first marriage of the famous navigator, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. As the second son of a third marriage Raleigh could be no sharer in the patrimonial estate, but he appears to have been well nurtured, though intercourse with sailors and peasants, destined to become profitable, gave him the broad Devonshire accent which he never lost. Like Bacon and Sidney, he both sought and left the University at an early age. Like them also, he proceeded to France, not, however, as a diplomatist or a traveller, but as a volunteer with the Huguenots, being, according to his own statement, present at Jarnac and in the disastrous

. . . . hour
When the children of darkness and evil had power

at Moncontour. This is all that is known of his residence in France, which was probably long, as no trace of him is found in England until 1576, when he prefixed a congratulatory poem to the "Steel Glass" of George Gascoigne, an intimate friend of his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. It is highly probable that he may have served in the Low Countries, but no record remains.

In September 1578 we at last find Raleigh taking a prominent part in a great enterprise as commander of a vessel in his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage of discovery, or rather of intended conquest, to America and the West Indies. It returned unsuccessful in the following May, and Raleigh betook himself to Court, where he appears in the picturesque character of the bearer of a challenge to Sir Philip Sidney from the Earl of Oxford. Similar affairs caused him to be imprisoned on two separate occasions. The Elizabethan courtier was, indeed,

Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,

but Raleigh proved that he was no less ready to

Seek the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth,

by accepting a command in Ireland. There is reason to suppose that he indirectly owed this turning-point in his fortunes to the interest of Sidney (whose life he is said to have protected against the machinations of his enemy Oxford) with the all-powerful Leicester and Walsingham. After a year and a half of

honourable service, during which he was for a time on the Commission for the Government of Munster, he returned to England as the bearer of despatches, and sprang at once into the highest favour with Elizabeth. The anecdote of his having laid down his cloak to help the Queen across a muddy path, if not literally true, as it well may be, at all events resumes and symbolises the happy boldness, unfailing presence of mind, and brisk and gallant bearing which won him Elizabeth's affection. Within a few years the needy cadet of a family of moderate estate was Captain of the Queen's Guard, Warder of the Stannaries, Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Vice-Admiral of Cornwall and Devon, owner of forty thousand acres in Ireland, including the whole town of Youghal, and endowed with a sheaf of lucrative patents and monopolies. If, as asserted by the Spanish Ambassador, the recipient of all these favours was an accomplice in Babington's conspiracy, he must have been the most ungrateful of mankind, but as he must also have been the most foolish we may safely conclude that his Excellency, then expelled from England and resident at Paris, was deceived by his agents at a distance. We may indeed observe by the way that the ambassadors of the sixteenth century, the Venetian excepted, were the greatest *gobemouches* conceivable, hungry for news "as the Red Sea for ghosts," lest they should be deemed unprofitable servants, and that history will suffer if their assertions are accepted without scrutiny. Raleigh does, however, appear in Mendoza's correspondence as one generally disposed to promote Spanish interests, but King Philip seems to have entertained shrewd suspicions of the genuineness of these professions.



Ruins of Collegiate Church and House of the Earl of Desmond at Youghal, the residence of Raleigh in Ireland

If any rumours of his complicity in the Babington conspiracy reached Elizabeth's ears, she showed her disregard of them by making him a considerable grant from the forfeited estates. This was in 1587; in 1584 Raleigh had obtained the patent which launched him upon the colonial career which, with all his varied activity in arms and letters, constitutes his highest title to fame. In the preceding year he had contributed largely to the voyage of his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, which resulted in the settlement of the first English colony, Newfoundland. Sir Humphrey having been lost at sea, Raleigh, who had only been prevented

from accompanying him by the Queen's prohibition, obtained the patent "to discover and conquer unknown lands, and take possession of them in the Queen's name," which eventually led to the occupation of the region to which Elizabeth herself gave the name of Virginia. Raleigh fitted out another expedition, and drew up the constitution of the projected colony. But the enterprise was mismanaged; a fresh expedition sent out to relieve the colonists could find no trace of them; and although Raleigh continued his efforts until the forfeiture of his patent in 1603, he achieved no result. The persistency of his endeavours, nevertheless, entitles him to the most eminent place among the founders of



Irish Men and Women in the reign of Elizabeth
British Museum, Add. MS. 28330

Britain's colonial empire. The most conspicuous of the immediate results of his labours were the introduction of potatoes and tobacco. both, indeed, previously known, but which he first rendered popular.

There is no evidence of Raleigh having taken any personal part in repelling the Armada, and it is probable that his duty of embodying the militia as Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall would detain him on shore. In the latter part of the year, and again in 1589, he was in Ireland, where he formed a friendship with Spenser, who celebrates him as "The Shepherd of the Ocean," and describes him as playing upon Spenser's own pipe, "himself as skilful in that art as any." In 1591 he was to have been second in command of an expedition to intercept

the Spanish treasure fleet; but the Queen refused to let him go, and his place was taken by his cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, whose heroic combat and death he celebrated in his first important prose work, *Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Azores*, a noble piece of writing, which forms the groundwork of Tennyson's famous ballad. In the following year he invested all the money he could raise in a naval expedition planned for the capture of a great treasure-laden Spanish carrack, and was putting to sea at the head of it when he was suddenly ordered to return. His days of favour were over; he had wounded his royal mistress's sense of decorum, and worse, her vanity, by an intrigue with one of her maids of honour, and was detained in prison till near the end of the year, except for a brief liberation that he might use his local influence to prevent the Devonshire people from plundering the carrack, which had been captured without him. Upon his release he married the object of his attachment, Elizabeth Throgmorton, for whom his affection seems to have been deep and lasting, and settled at Sherborne Castle, spending, however, much time in London in the discharge of his Parliamentary duties and in the intimacy of men of letters and science. He resumed his long poem, *Cynthia, the Lady of the Sea*, which he must have commenced before receiving from Spenser the title of "The Shepherd of the Ocean." "The Lady of the Sea" is Elizabeth, and the author probably represented his devout obedience to his mistress under the figure of "the moon-led waters." All is lost except the twenty-first book, which reveals little of the plan of the poem, the allegorical machinery being discarded for direct reference to the poet's offended sovereign, eloquent indeed, but so prolix as almost to justify his naïve apprehension that, instead of softening her heart he will shut her eyes:

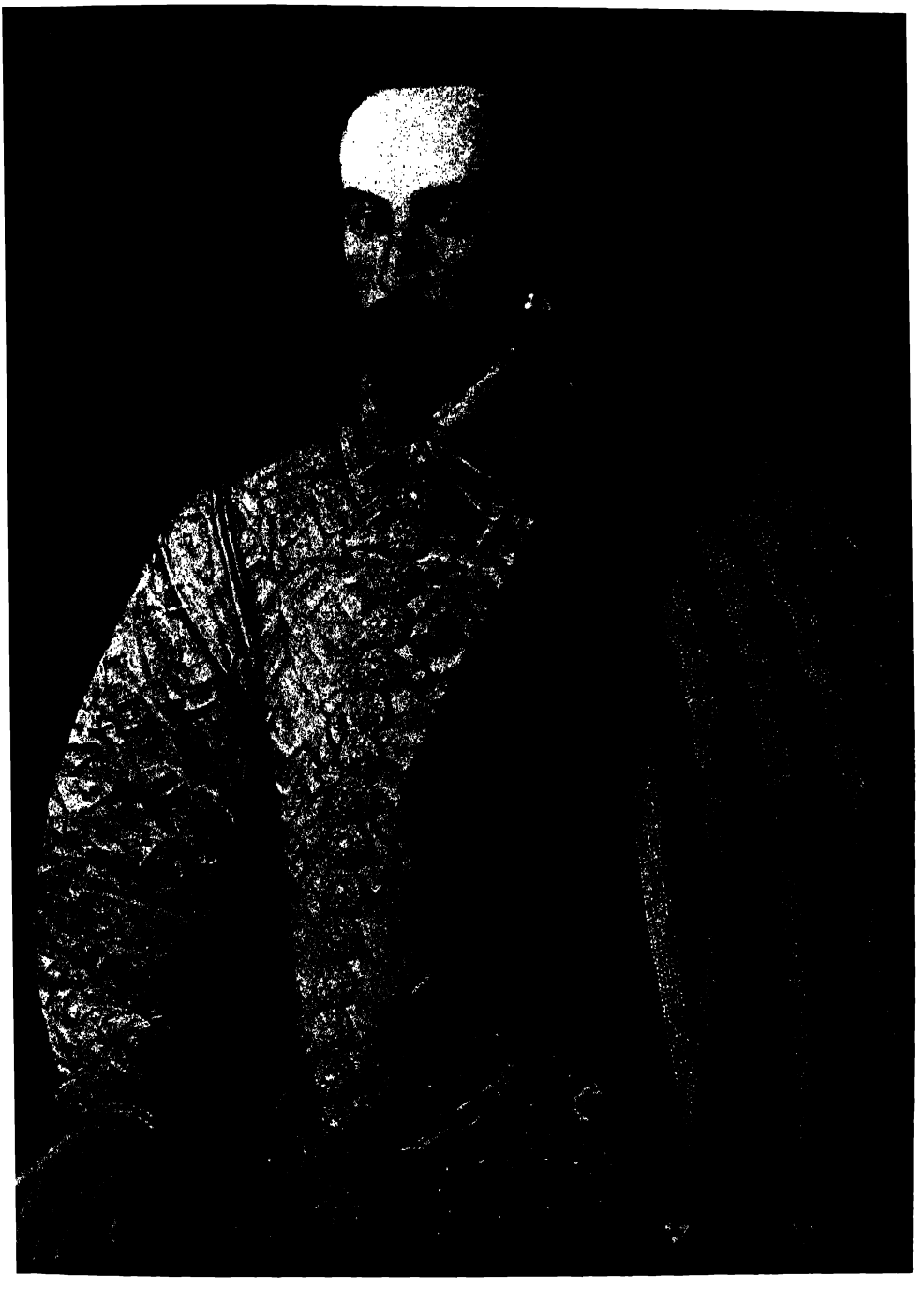


Sherborne Castle
From a photograph

Leave them! or lay them up with thy despairs!
She hath resolved and judged thee long ago.
Thy lines are now a murmuring to her ears,
Like to a falling stream, which, passing slow,

Is wont to nourish sleep and quietness;
So shall thy painful labours be perused,
And draw in rest, which sometime had regard;
But those her cares thy errors have excused.

The imperfect rhymes and frequent gaps show that this part of the poem at least had not received Raleigh's final corrections. The earlier cantos were known to many, and their disappearance is extraordinary. Raleigh is almost the only considerable English author who has suffered by the total loss of important



Sir Walter Raleigh.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT ATTRIBUTED TO ZUCCARO.

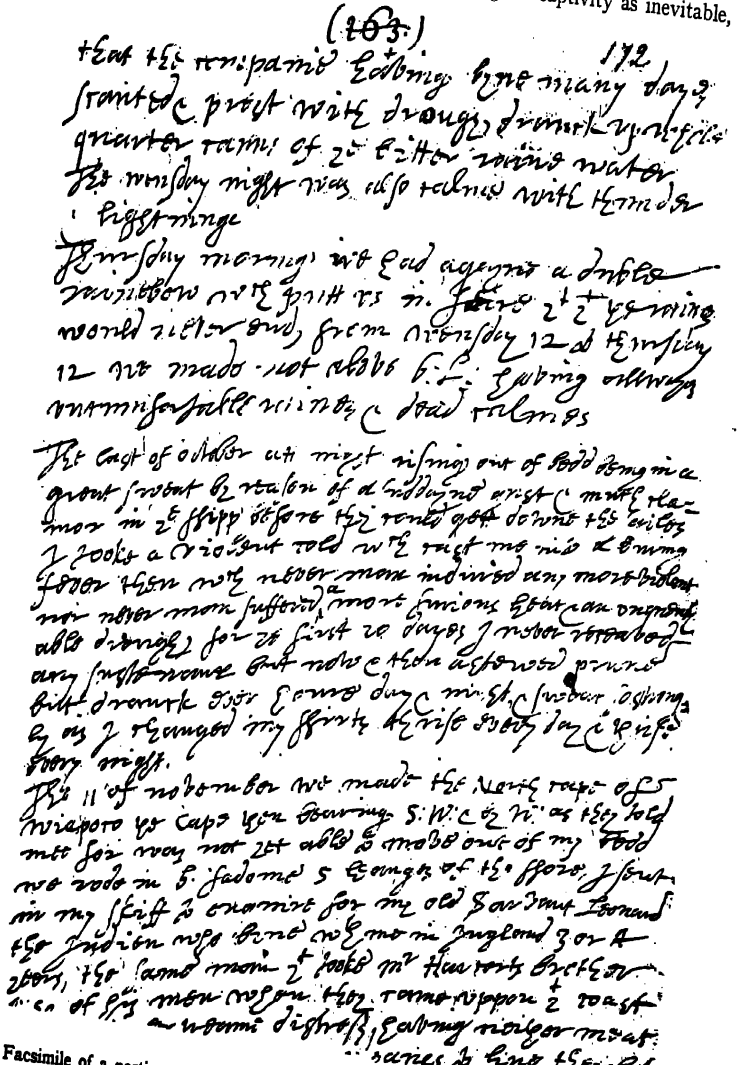
writings. Not only *Cynthia* is lost, but many prose works, including, if Ben Jonson is to be believed, a life of Elizabeth.

The Expedition to Guiana

Raleigh's restless spirit soon suggested more active measures for winning distinction and regaining the favour of his sovereign. In 1595 he made his celebrated expedition to Guiana, misled by reports of the fabulous El Dorado, but right in so far as Guiana was actually a land of gold, whose wealth it was beyond his power to bring to light. His accuracy as respects everything falling under his own observation has been fully confirmed, and nothing discreditable to him appears either in the conception or the conduct of the expedition. England and Spain were at war, and Raleigh had every right to instruct the Indians respecting "Ezrabeta Cassipuna Aquerevana, the great cacique of the North. who had more caciques under her than there were trees in their island," who had sent him to free them from the Castellanos. He showed them her Majesty's portrait; "it would have been easy to have brought them idolatrous thereof." His narrative was published in 1596, in which year he also brilliantly distinguished himself in Essex's expedition against Cadiz. Another expedition in the following year, also under Essex's orders, failed in its object of capturing the Spanish treasure-ships, and unhappily laid the foundation of a mortal enmity between Essex and Raleigh from Raleigh having taken Fayal without Essex's orders. He was undoubtedly right, but his subsequent conduct to Essex was wanting in generosity. He soon found himself in Essex's situation. For two years before James I.'s accession, the new King's mind had been poisoned against Raleigh by insinuations that he was plotting to bring in Lady Arabella Stuart. The truth is most difficult to ascertain; if a man of Raleigh's sagacity was seduced into so wild and desperate a course, it is one of the most striking examples on record of the subjugation of judgment by ambition. Deprived as he was of most of his offices upon James's arrival, he may have been led into giving some countenance to Lord Cobham's conspiracy in the summer of 1603, but the only positive evidence is the declaration of Cobham himself, a person worthy of little credit. Raleigh was, nevertheless, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced to death, reprieved, and imprisoned in the Tower, where he remained fourteen years, solacing his captivity by the composition of his *History of the World*. Better fitted to command the devotion of inferiors than to conciliate the goodwill of equals, he seems to have entirely failed to obtain the confidence of the leading statesmen of his time, who distrusted him as an adventurer, and whose envy at his promotion had probably been exasperated by his haughty bearing. The popularity which he enjoyed among the commonalty counted for little; he had built, like Bacon, on Court favour, and when this failed nothing stood between him and ruin. He, nevertheless, began to rebuild his fortunes in a new quarter. The heir-apparent disapproved of his father's policy in most respects, and in none more than the persecution of Raleigh, who might well have become his chief adviser if he had lived to ascend the throne. In Prince Henry's fatal illness, as appears by a letter from Chamberlain to Carleton, in the State Paper Office, a cordial was sent him by Sir Walter Raleigh, "who loses by his death his greatest hope of release." In another letter the same writer says of the Prince: "His papers show that he had many vast conceits and projects"—some of them, in all likelihood, inspirations from Raleigh, who deplores his blighted hopes in the *History of the World*, published in 1614. James, irritated by the freedom

of Raleigh's criticisms on monarchs, wished to suppress the book, but eventually permitted its circulation.

It would have been well for Raleigh if, accepting his captivity as inevitable,



Facsimile of a portion of Raleigh's "Journal of a Second Voyage to Guiana"
MS. preserved in the British Museum

he had devoted the remainder of his life to the completion of his history. His imprisonment had always been mild, and the copiousness of citation in his history shows that abundance of intellectual resources were at his command. It is not wonderful, however, that as a man of action he should have pined for freedom,

but the means he adopted to obtain it, no doubt the only means at his disposal, were tainted with deceit. Persuading the Government to send him out on another expedition to Guiana, he concealed the fact that the mine he undertook to discover was in the territory of Spain, then at peace with England, and, while denying any evil intention, combined his scheme with a projected piratical attack upon the Spanish treasure-galleons. He had fair notice from the Government that an act of piracy would forfeit his life, and when in June 1618 he returned to England, after a series of disasters which cannot be read without the deepest compassion, no blame could have been attached to the Government if they had brought him to a fair trial and executed a just sentence. Their cowardice in avoiding the issue, and iniquity in executing him upon the old charge of the Cobham conspiracy, joined to the universal belief that the motive was not the vindication of justice but the propitiation of Spain, made him more than ever a popular hero, a character enhanced by his spirited bearing on the scaffold, where his wit and presence of mind emulated Sir Thomas More.



An illustration by John White to Raleigh's "Voyage into Virginia," 1585

As a writer of prose Raleigh stands very high; his diction is elegant and unaffectedly dignified, less magnificent than Hooker's but free from cumbrousness and inversion; approaching modern ease and lucidity, yet retaining antique stateliness; the style of a scholar, yet of a courtier and man of the world. Were it not for these recommendations the work upon which his fame as an author principally rests, *The History of the World*, composed during his captivity in the Tower, would be as unserviceable to his own reputation as to the student, for it is of necessity entirely uncritical. Raleigh can do nothing but follow the Biblical and classical historians along a darkling path, in total ignorance of the floods of light with which it was to be illuminated by science and discovery. But for gleams of genius his book could have been but another Rollin, but it is continually irradiated by striking thoughts and by flashes of digression, as where the author speaks from his

"The History of the World"

own observation of South American mangroves laden with oysters, or describes the daring stratagem by which Sark was won back from the French in Queen Mary's time, or anticipates Erasmus Darwin by discovering the variability of species, or astonishes us by a passage of Æschylus felicitously rendered from the Latin version (Raleigh evidently was little versed in Greek) into rhyme royal :—

> But Fortune governed all their works, till when
> I first found out how stars did set and rise,
> A profitable art to mortal men ;
> And others of like use I did devise ;
> As, letters to compose and learned pen
> I first did teach, and first did amplify
> The Mother of the Muses, Memory.

The work was partly undertaken at the request and for the instruction of Prince Henry, who, Raleigh tells us, read part of it in MS. with approval. It extends from the Creation to the overthrow of the Macedonian Kingdom, B.C. 168. Two more parts of equal extent were designed, but if any more was written it has not been preserved. In his preface Raleigh tells us something of his principles of composition, and explains how he has " followed the best geographers, who seldom give names to those small brooks whereof many joined together, make great rivers, till such time as they become united, and run in a main stream to the ocean sea." Feeling that the erudition required by his comprehensive theme may expose him to the charge of plagiarism, he acknowledges how greatly he is beholden to the assistance of friends, without on that account abating his just though modest estimate of his qualifications :—

> I am not altogether ignorant of the laws of history, and of the kinds. The same hath been taught by many, but by no man better, and with greater brevity, than by that excellent learned gentleman, Sir Francis Bacon.

Bacon had helped to send Raleigh to the Tower, and was to help to send him to the scaffold, yet we see that his writings had solaced Raleigh's captivity. " The animosities die, the humanities live for ever." There are other traces of Raleigh's acquaintance with contemporary as well as ancient literature. The celebrated and very fine passage on the influences of the stars is clearly adapted from Du Bartas, yet with a dignity precluding the charge of plagiarism.

> And if we cannot deny, but that God hath given virtu to springs and fountains, to cold earth, to plants and stones, minerals, and the excremental parts of the basest living creatures, why should we rob the beautiful stars of their working powers ? For, seeing they are many in number, and of eminent beauty and magnitude, we may not think that in the treasury of his wisdom who is infinite, there can be wanting, even for every star, a peculiar virtue and operation ; as every herb, plant, fruit, and flower adorning the face of the earth hath the like. For as these were not created to beautify the earth alone, and to cover and shadow her dusty face, but otherwise for the use of man and beast, to feed them and cure them, so were not those uncountable glorious bodies set in the firmament for no other end

than to adorn it, but for his instruments and organs of his divine providence so far as it has pleased his great will to determine.

Du Bartas thus, in Sylvester's translation :—

I'll not believe that the Arch Architect
With all these fires the heavenly arches decked
Only for show, and with these glittering shields
To amaze poor shepherds watching in the fields.
I'll not believe that the least flower which pranks
Our garden-borders, or our common banks,
And the least stone that in her warming lap
Our mother Earth doth covetously wrap,
Hath some peculiar virtue of its own,
And that the stars of heaven have none.

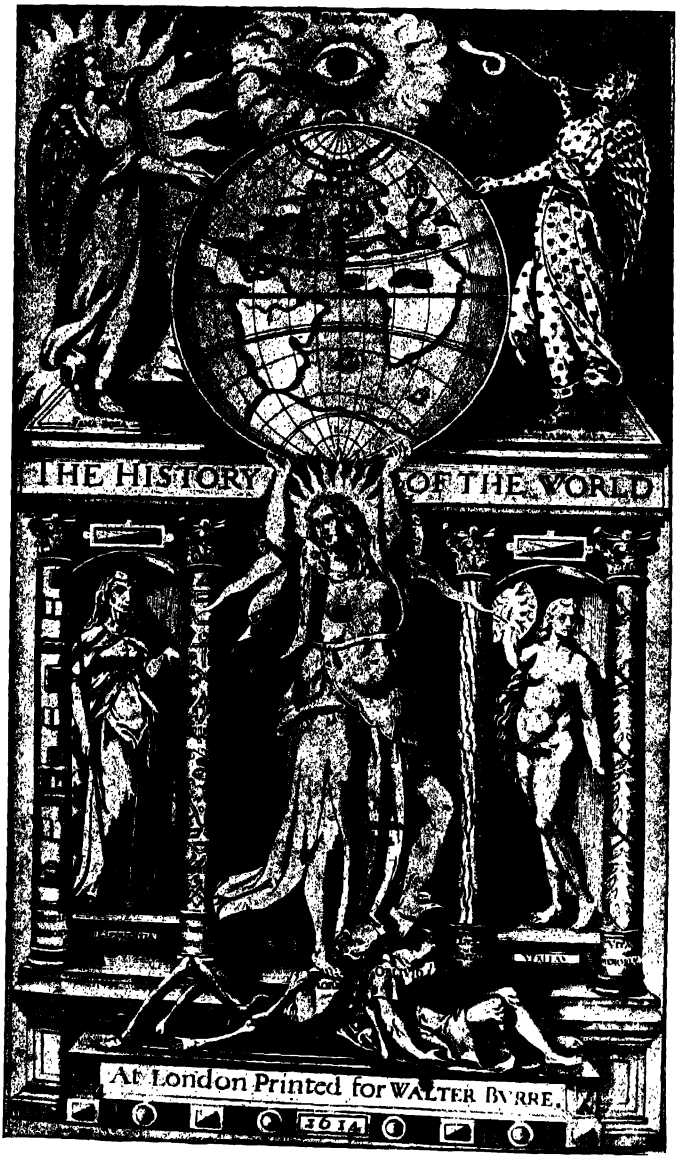
The History of the World is not sparingly sown with fine passages resembling the above, and there is another class of passages not fine but most interesting—descriptions of battles and military operations which bear the impress of the skilful and experienced soldier. Such merits, however, cannot impart vitality to a work so flawed and faulty in the essential basis of all history, accurate knowledge. If, instead of the history of ancient times, Raleigh had written that of his own, he would have conferred a priceless service upon literature, and ranked with the most eminent historians. Nor did this escape him, but he assigns unanswerable reasons why it could not be :—

It will be said by many that I might have been more pleasing to the reader if I had written the story of mine own times, having been permitted to draw water as near the well head as another. To this I answer that whosoever, in writing a modern history, shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth. There is no mistress or guide than Truth hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries. He that goes after her too far off loveth her sight and loveth himself ; and he that follows after her at a middle distance—I know not whether I should call that kind of course temper or baseness.

Raleigh himself cannot be entirely acquitted of flattering James, though most of his eulogy has at least a foundation in truth, and he is a model of reserve compared to Bacon. He seems, indeed, to escape as soon as possible from James's personality to the advantage which the State had undoubtedly derived from his accession. If he is sincere—and it is difficult to think him otherwise—he must have repented having espoused the cause of Arabella Stuart, if he really did so :—

Neither might we forget or neglect our thankfulness to God for the uniting of the smaller parts of Britain to the south, viz., of Scotland to England, which, though they were severed but by small brooks and banks, yet by reason of the long continued war, and the cruelties exercised upon each other, in the affection of the nations they were infinitely severed. This, I say, is not the least of God's blessings which his majesty hath brought with him into this land, no, put all our petty grievances together, and heap them up at their height, they will appear but as a molehill, compared with the mountain of this concord. And if all the historians since then have acknowledged the uniting of the red rose and the white, for the greatest happiness (Christian religion excepted) whatever this kingdom received from God, certainly the peace between the two lions of gold and gules, and the making of them one, doth by many degrees exceed the former ; for by it, besides the sparing

of our British blood, heretofore and during the differences so often and abundantly shed, the state of England is more assured, the kingdom more enabled to recover her ancient honour and rights, and by it made more invincible than by all our former alliances, practices, policies, and conquests.



Title-page of first edition of Raleigh's "History of the World"

Towards the close of his work Raleigh resumes and surpasses the grand manner of his introduction. In some measure this ascent to a higher region of thought and expression has impaired the reputation of the book, which has

been treated as though, like the glowworm, it carried all its light in its tail. In fact, dry as large portions are, the book is everywhere incandescent with suppressed fire, but it is only at the conclusion that Raleigh shows how great a writer he might have been if he had always written on themes admitting the unrestrained exercise of his eloquence :—

> By this which we have already set down is seen the beginning and end of the three first monarchies of the world, whereof the founders and erectors thought that they could never have ended. That of Rome, which made the fourth, was also at this time almost the highest. We have left it flourishing in the middle of the field ; having rooted up, or cut down, all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world. But after some continuance it shall begin to lose the beauty it had ; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another ; her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither ; and a rabble of barbarian nations enter the field, and cut her down.
>
> Now these great kings and conquering nations have been the subject of those ancient histories which have been preserved and yet remain among us ; and with them of so many tragical poets as in the persons of powerful princes and other mighty men have complained against infidelity, time, destiny, and, most of all, against the variable success of worldly things, and instability of fortune. To these undertakings these great lords of the world have been stirred up rather by the desire of fame, which plougheth up the air, and soweth in the wind, than by the affection of bearing rule, which draweth after it so much vexation and so many cares : and that this is true, the good advice of Cineas to Pyrrhus proves. And, certainly, as fame has often been dangerous to the living, so is it to the dead of no use at all ; because separate from knowledge. Which, were it otherwise, and the extreme ill bargain of buying this last discourse understood by them which were dissolved, they themselves would then rather have wished to have stolen out of the world without noise, than to be put in mind that they have purchased the report of their actions in the world by rapine, oppression and cruelty ; by giving in spoil the innocent and labouring soul to the idle and insolent, and by having emptied the cities of their ancient inhabitants, and filled them again with so many and so variable sorts of sorrows.

The theme is pursued further, and concludes with the famous apostrophe which has been justly described as rivalling the finest passages in Sir Thomas Browne :—

> It is Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.
>
> O eloquent, just, and mighty Death ! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded ; what none have dared, thou hast done ; and whom all the world have flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised ; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet !*

If Raleigh had written his *Discoverie of Guiana* as a modern traveller of his literary power would have written it, he would have made a great book upon a subject so instinct with romance and appropriate for the embellishments of magnificent description. Raleigh, however, could not place himself at Kingsley's point of view ; his object was, and under his circumstances must

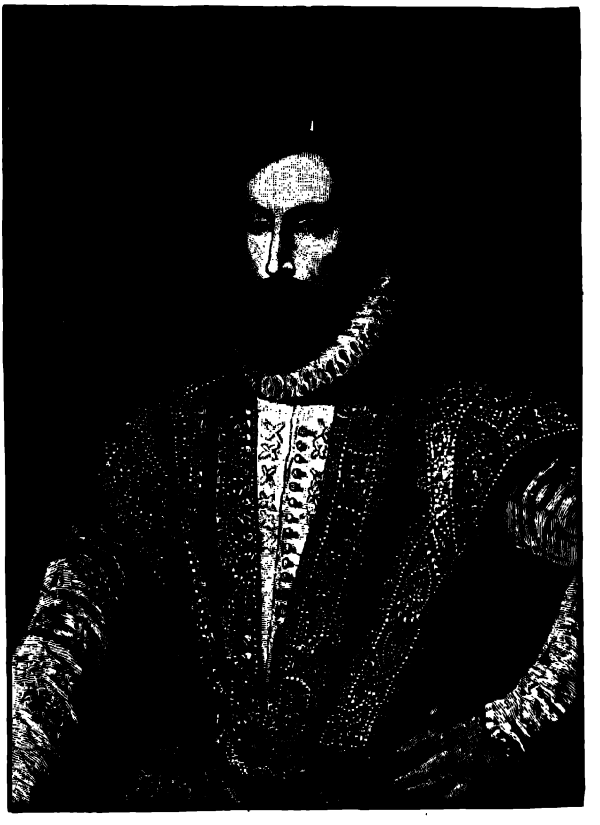
have been, utilitarian—his book is not an epic but a prospectus. He preaches the advantages for England of the colonisation of Guiana, and enforces his argument by glowing descriptions of the wealth of the imaginary Manoa or El Dorado to which Guiana was to be the portal, mainly derived from Spanish sources, and in which there is no reason to question his genuine belief. After Mexico and Peru nothing seemed impossible. Raleigh cannot be censured for believing what was told him on apparently good authority, any more than for his belief in another class of fictions transferred from the Old World to the New; though Shakespeare, a friend of his enemy Essex, may be thought to glance at him when he speaks of travellers' tales of

> men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders.

When, however, pyrites with a semblance of gold were actually entrusted to him, he recognised them for what they were, and he is careful to point out that his confident belief in the mineral wealth of the country is based upon the testimony of others: "It shall be found a weak policy in me either to betray myself or my country with imaginations, neither am I so far in love with that lodging, watching, care, peril, diseases, ill savoury bad fare, and many other mischiefs that accompany these voyages, as to woo myself again into any there, were I not assured that the sun covereth not so much riches in any part of the earth." The narrative is indeed full of records of hardship in the endless watery labyrinths of the Orinoco, sufficient to deter any but a very determined adventurer. "What with victuals being most fish, with the wet clothes of so many men thrust together and the heat of the sun, I will undertake there was never any prison in England that could be found more unsavoury and loathsome, especially to myself, who had for many years been dieted and cared for in a sort far differing." Passages like the following, giving the more brilliant side of the pictures, are infrequent in comparison:—

> When we ran to the top of the first hills of the plains adjoining the river, we beheld that wonderful breach of waters which ran down [the river] Caroli; and might from that mountain see the river turn, it ran in three parts, about twenty miles off, and there appeared some ten or twelve over-falls in sight, every one as high over the other as a church tower, which fell with that fury that the rebound of waters made it seem as if it had been all covered over with a great shower of rain; and in some places we took it at the first for a smoke that had risen over some great town. For mine own part I was well persuaded from thence to have returned, being a very ill footman, but the rest were all so desirous to go near the said strange thunder of waters, as they drew me by little and little, till we came into the next valley, where we might better discern the same. I never saw a more beautiful country, nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the vallies, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without brush or stubble, all fair green grass, the ground of hard sand easy to march on, either for horse or foot, the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation perching on the river's side, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion.

Raleigh is credited with several minor publications, usually of political or ethical character, some of which are certainly spurious. The most important of these which may be regarded as genuine are *Maxims of State* and *The Prorogation of Parliament*, both written during his captivity in the Tower, and *Advice to a Son*, worldly wise but pitched in the very lowest key of feeling. There is nothing immoral or exactly reprehensible, but the observations on wedlock, for example, are exactly such as might have confirmed Shakespeare in his resolution to bequeath his wife his second best bed. It is remarkable that, until Rousseau's influence became potent, not a single writer from Bacon to Chesterfield was able to counsel the young without in some measure lowering his own reputation with posterity.



Sir Walter Raleigh
After the portrait at Knole

Raleigh as a Poet

As a poet Raleigh belongs to the class of wits, of whom he is one of the first and best examples in our literature. Destitute of "the vision and faculty divine," he has *esprit*, the power of expressing himself with point and liveliness upon anything that has for the moment captivated his interest. Hence, in the pieces of his that have been preserved, he appears almost exclusively in the character of an occasional poet. He would probably stand higher but for the loss of his one sustained effort, the *Cynthia*. Even this was prompted by Elizabeth's disfavour, but the allegorical scheme must have made large demands upon his fancy and constructive faculty. The fragment remaining can convey no just idea of the general character of the poem, and is, moreover, in a most unpolished state. Passages, however, show that it wants neither dignity of thought nor of expression :—

If to the living were my muse addressed,
Or did my mind her own sprite still inhold ;

Were not my living passion so repressed,
As to the dead the dead did them unfold.

Some sweeter words, some more becoming verse,
Should witness my mishap in higher kind.—
But my love's wounds, my fancy in the hearse,
The idea but resting of a wasted mind.

The blossoms fallen, the sap gone from the trees,
The broken monuments of my great desires—
From these so lost what may the affections be,
What heat in cinders of extinguished fires ?

No doubt, however, Raleigh's special field in the domain of poetry was occasional verse, "the casual brilliance of a mind in constant activity." His intimacy with Marlowe had been sufficiently close to draw upon him the imputation of free-thinking, and when Marlowe produced his delightful lyric pastoral, "Come, live with me, and be my love," it was natural for Raleigh to respond in this half-serious half-mocking strain :—

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures well might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold ;
And Philomel becometh dumb ;
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields.
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy buds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and youth still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

It should be remarked that the authorship of many lyrics ascribed to Raleigh is not entirely certain. None were printed as his in his lifetime, except complimentary verses prefixed to his friends' books. Several are attributed to other writers in MS. copies, and his editor, Dr. Hannah, has eliminated twenty-five on sufficient grounds. The reply to Marlowe, however, appears sufficiently authenticated not only by the friendship of the poets but by the testimony of Izaak Walton ; and if it is Raleigh's, so must be the

equally celebrated lyric *Passions*, which displays the same intellectual brightness and nimbleness. The complimentary verses are, of course, genuine, and if Raleigh had written nothing but the sonnet prefixed to Sir Arthur Gorges' *Lucan* he would have proved his ability to achieve a grave and stately strain. It is the more interesting as Gorges had served under Raleigh in the voyage of 1597, of which he was also the historian, and because, being written in the Tower in 1614, it is fraught with an undercurrent of reference to Raleigh himself :—

Had Lucan hid the truth to please the time,
 He had been too unworthy of thy pen,
Who never sought nor ever cared to climb
 By flattery or seeking worthless men.
For this thou hast been bruised, but yet those scars
 Do beautify no less than those wounds do,
Received in just and in religious wars ;
 Though thou hast bled by both, and bearest them too.
Change not ! to change thy fortune 'tis too late ;
 Who with a manly faith resolves to die
May promise to himself a lasting state,
 Though not so great, yet free from infamy ;
Such was thy Lucan, whom so to translate,
Nature thy Muse like Lucan's did create.

If poems have been attributed to Raleigh without warrant, it is also possible that poems really by him circulated without his name. This may perhaps be the case with the graceful lines to Cynthia, Raleigh's poetical name for his royal mistress, lamenting the withdrawal of her favour, printed in Dowland's Music Book of 1597, even though in a copy found in an album of James I.'s time and translated by Goethe and printed in the correspondence of Thomas Lovell Beddoes the initials appended are not W. R. but W. S. It is such a piece as Raleigh might well have composed, and its elegant finish seems to indicate a practised hand :—

My thoughts are winged with hopes, my hopes with love ;
 Mount, Love, into the Moon in clearest night,
And say, as she doth in the heaven move,
 In earth so wanes and waxes my delight ;
And whisper this but softly in her ears,
How oft Doubt hang the head and Trust shed tears.

And you, my thoughts that seem mistrust to carry,
 If for mistrust my mistress do you blame,
Say, though you alter yet you do not vary,
 As she doth change and yet remain the same.
Distrust doth enter hearts but not infect,
And love is sweetest seasoned with suspect.

If she for this with clouds do mask her eyes,
 And make the heavens dark with her disdain,
With windy sights[1] disperse then in the skies,
 Or with thy tears dissolve them into rain.
Thoughts, hopes, and love return to me no more,
Till Cynthia shine as she hath done before.

[1] Sighs : so written to avoid collision with "skies."

Raleigh's place in the literature of England resembles that of Cæsar in the literature of Rome—that of a well-nigh universal genius, excellent alike in prose and verse, who might have attained the highest place in the former at least if the man of letters had not with him been subordinate to the man of action. It says much for the era of Elizabeth that so brilliant a personage should at the same time be so much the man of his age. For this he is great, rather than for his adventurous exploits or his literary performances; even though these suffice to place him in the leading rank of both the doers and the writers of his time.

CHAPTER II

THE LESSER LIGHTS OF ELIZABETHAN PROSE

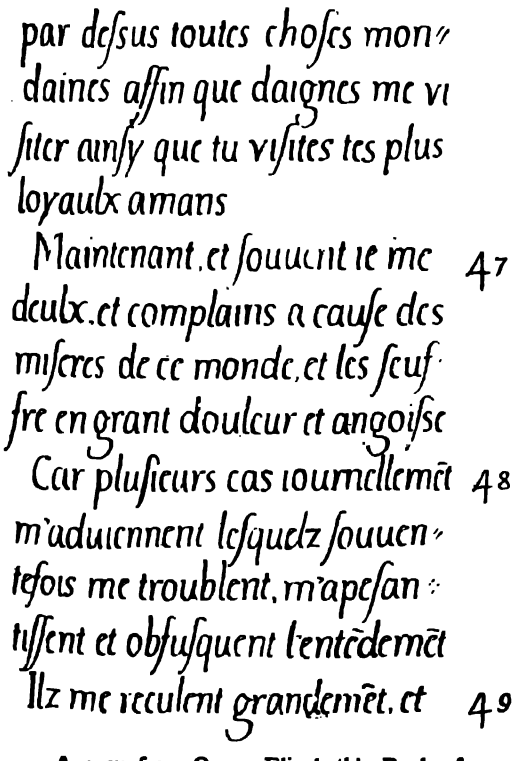
Special characteristics of the Elizabethan age

In our last chapter, with some violence to strict chronological accuracy, we have treated of the four great prose-writers of the Elizabethan and, in the case of two of them, of the Jacobean era also, who stand forth conspicuously from the contemporary throng. These eliminated, we discern the better the affluence of the period in literary talent when we perceive how much remains after so vast a deduction. There is hardly any department without some representative with merit sufficient to have brought him down to our day as a writer to be remembered, and even consulted on other accounts than his relation to his time, or as an illustration of contemporary manners or of the progress of the language: and this after abstracting the poetry and drama which, apart from the four great writers considered separately, invest the age with its most signal literary distinction. The age of Elizabeth is as much in advance of that of Henry VIII. as this was of the fifteenth century. Tennyson has admirably characterised the special distinction of the Elizabethan age by a single epithet, "The spacious times of great Elizabeth." The world had grown wider everywhere, but most of all in England. England was better able than any other country to take advantage of the three great events which had so vastly expanded the intellectual horizon, the revival of classical literature, the publication of the Scriptures in the vernacular, and the discovery of the New World. The impulse communicated by the first of these was indeed common property, but Protestant countries alone could profit by the second, and no Protestant country but England and Holland could take advantage of the third. Had England not embraced the Reformation, she could have had no justification for those wars in the Low Countries and those expeditions to the Spanish Main which probably contributed more than anything else to kindle the national imagination to the point at which all enterprise, whether of a material or intellectual order, seems the fulfilment of manifest destiny. The extravagance of the inferior writers, no less than the grandeur of the higher, attests the prevalent temper of animation and excitement. The æther was ampler, the air diviner than of yore; the fields alike of action and of thought were indeed "invested with purpureal gleams."

Its general picturesqueness

The era of Elizabeth was thus one of those, of which human history counts some six or seven, in which the mind of man was suddenly expanded by being introduced to a more extensive area, whether through the operation of con-

quest, as in the ages of Alexander the Great and the Crusades; or of discoveries, as in that of Columbus; or of new ideas, as in those of the Reformation and the French Revolution. Such periods must be favourable to literature and art, supposing the requisite conditions to exist, which is not always the case. In the Elizabethan age itself, for example, while the literary conditions were most favourable, interest in art languished, except as regarded music. With every allowance, it seems remarkable that the age should have achieved so little in fine art, domestic architecture excepted. So far from being an unpicturesque generation, it was one of the most picturesque in English history, whether with regard to the characters of its leading personages, the incidents of their lives, the costumes in which they arrayed themselves, or the magnificence of shows and entertainments. This general picturesqueness communicated itself to the literature. The authors of the time are resplendent with glowing tints, and in this point of view resemble even the most picturesque of those among those of their successors who have not, like Byron and Shelley, led lives of adventure, as a picture resembles an engraving. It may justly be said that there is not one among the leading authors, statesmen, commanders, or voyagers of the age whom it is possible to represent in a mean or prosaic light. All the artistic feeling of the period seems to have been absorbed into its daily life: the men do not make, but are pictures. The energy and undoubting self-confidence of the age are shown by the scale on which its works are undertaken. The plan of Spenser's *Faery Queene* is as much grander than Ariosto's as his Gloriana, the Virgin Queen, is higher than the house of Ferrara. Raleigh cannot get away from the same sovereign under twenty books; and when seeking a subject for his pen in the Tower, nothing will serve him but the history of the world. Sidney found the voluminous *Arcadia* a pretty amusement for a summer. Marlowe condenses the morals of all miracle and mystery plays into one drama. No English writer, until the great revival after the French Revolution, has since shown an equal courage in venturing upon colossal themes, except Milton, and even he


par deſsus toutes choſes mon-
daines affin que daignes me vi
ſiter ainſy que tu viſites tes plus
loyaulx amans
Maintenant, et ſouuent ie me 47
deulx, et complains a cauſe des
miſeres de ce monde, et les ſouf-
fre en grant doulcur et angoiſſe
Car pluſieurs cas iournellemēt 48
m'aduiennent leſquelz ſouuen-
teſois me troublent, m'apeſan-
tiſſent et obfuſquent lentēdemēt
Ilz me reculent grandemēt, et 49

A page from Queen Elizabeth's Book of Private Prayers
From a MS. in the British Museum



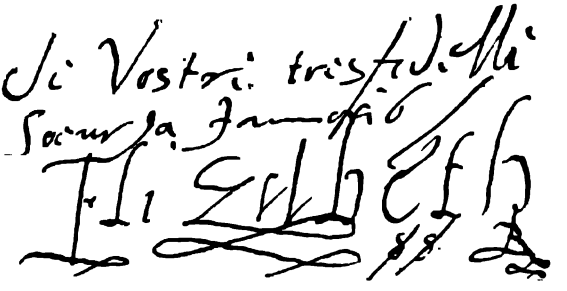
Queen Elizabeth.

FROM AN ORIGINAL CRAYON DRAWING BY F. ZUCCERO, MADE IN LONDON IN 1575.

seems to have gauged the measure of his powers with more nicety than the Elizabethans; he is nearer perfection, but wants their exuberance.

In the present chapter we have not to deal with Titans, but still with men of fair stature. The first person to be mentioned is QUEEN ELIZABETH herself, though her pen would scarcely have gained her a place in literary history if her sceptre had not made her the centre of the literary movement of her time. If she ever penned anything with the remotest view to publication it was the translations of Sallust and Boethius which she left in MS. She was admirably educated, a perfect mistress of Latin and French, as those foreign ambassadors knew at whose heads she would occasionally hurl scathing orations in these languages. She also spoke Italian and was not ignorant of Greek. But, with all her accomplishments, she was destitute of the taste for literature which her father and brother had possessed, and did little for the encouragement of learning or authorship in England. She kept her library up well, but chiefly by importations from abroad. She had no idea that the literary glories of her reign rivalled the political, and no appreciation of the honour Spenser did her by making her the central figure of the *Faery Queene*. A writer not far from her time does indeed affirm that Shakespeare's plays 'took" her; the tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written at her desire is not wholly disentitled to credence; one or two pieces of verse are dubiously attributed to her; and Raleigh really seems to have thought that he could sing himself back into her good graces. In the main, however, the bent of her mind was entirely practical, and she appears to most advantage in her letters on affairs of state. Nothing, for example, could be better than this admonition of a past-mistress in statecraft to a neophyte, the King of Scots, that if he desires to retain her friendship he must take heed to his ways:

Queen Elizabeth



Queen Elizabeth's Signature
From a MS. in the British Museum

> RIGHT DEAR BROTHER,—Your gladsome acceptance of my offered amity, together with the desire you seem to have engraven in your mind to make merits correspondent, makes me in full opinion that some enemies to our good will shall lose much travail, with making frustrate their baiting stratagems, which I know to be many, and by sundry means to be explored. I cannot halt with you so much as to deny that I have seen such evident shows of your contrarious dealings that if I made not my reckoning the better of the months, I might condemn you as unworthy of such as I mind to show myself toward you, and therefore I am well pleased to take any colour to defend your honour, and hope you will remember that who seeketh two strings to one bow, he may shoot strong, but never straight; and if you suppose that princes' causes be veiled so covertly that no intelligence may bewray them, deceive not yourself; we old foxes can find shifts to save ourselves

by others' malice, and come by knowledge of greatest secret, specially if it touch our freehold. It becometh therefore all our rank to deal sincerely, lest, if we use it not, when we do it, we be hardly believed. I write not this, my dear brother, for doubt but for remembrance. 1585.

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of British literature is the backwardness of the Britons in learning to write history. Scotland certainly produced a distinguished historian in the days of Elizabeth, but George Buchanan wrote in Latin, and the merit of Camden's *Annals* is largely due to their having been originally composed in that language. Many of the reflections in Raleigh's *History of the World* are worthy of any historian: but his narrative is undertaken on too large a scale to be much more than an imperfectly digested compilation. In the middle ages English historians had vied with the best of any nation; but now that the facilities for writing history were abundantly multiplied; now that Machiavelli and Guicciardini and Bembo in Italy, Barros in Portugal, and somewhat later the Spaniard Mariana and the Italian Davila, were producing perfect models of history from the literary point of view, England, with the signal exception of Bacon's *History of Henry the Seventh*, could show no admirable historical composition, originally written in the vernacular, until the time of Clarendon and Burnet, whose works, with all their excellences, partake largely of the nature of memoirs. And yet one of the earliest of English chroniclers after the invention of printing (most conveniently, however, considered here) but narrowly misses the character of an eminent historian.

Edward Hall (1498 ? 1547) was a lawyer and a man of superior education. He was attached to the Reformation, and made it his especial business to panegyrise the house of Tudor in a history extending from the accession of Henry IV. to the death of Henry VIII., but only fully completed by the original author to 1532. The political tendency of his book is shown by the original title, *The Union of the Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York.* There is a remarkable diversity in his work according as he writes as an eye-witness or otherwise. The earlier part, where he merely follows other historians, is the best in point of composition, fluent, stately, and sonorous, though infected with an unusual number of Latin and French expressions. When writing of his own times he appears in comparison cramped and pedestrian, but shows an insight for which the former period of his history had afforded little scope; and he is an invaluable index to the public feeling of his day. Whether applied to the dignity of the former or to the sagacity of the latter portion of his work, Bishop Creighton's dictum that his merits have hitherto met with scanty recognition is entirely correct. With less partiality and more respect for the purity of English speech he might have been our first great historian. Shakespeare has made considerable use of him. His predecessor, ROBERT FABYAN (died 1513), deserves remembrance as the first who attempted to reduce the narratives of his predecessors into a general history, but he has neither Hall's style nor his judgment, and is chiefly valuable from the attention which his position as an alderman led him to devote to municipal matters. His chronicle was brought down by him to the death of Henry VII. and continued by anonymous writers.

The following passage is a fair example of Hall's style when he writes as an historian:

HENRY VI. AND QUEEN MARGARET.

King Henry which reigned at this time was a man of a meek spirit and of a simple wit, preferring peace before war, rest before business, honesty before profit, and quietness before labour. And to the intent that all men might perceive that there would be none more chaste, more meek, more holy, or a better creature: in him reigned steadfastness, modesty, integrity, and patience to be marvelled at, taking and suffering all losses, chances, displeasures, and such worldly torments in good heart and with a patient manner as though they had chanced by his own fault and negligent oversight; yet he was governed by those whom he should have ruled, and bridled of such as he should sharply have spurred. He gaped not for honour, nor thirsted for riches, but studied only for the health of his soul, the saving whereof he esteemed to be the greatest wisdom, and the loss thereof the extremest folly that could be. But on the other part the Queen his wife was a woman of a great wit, and yet of no greater wit than of a hault stomach, desirous of glory, covetous of honour, and of reason, policy, counsel, and other gifts and talents belonging to a man, full and flowing; of wit and wiliness she lacked nothing, nor of diligency itself and business she was not unexpert; but yet she had one point of a very woman, for oftentime when she was fully bent on a matter she was like a weather-cock, mutable and turning. This was more perceiving that her husband did not frankly rule as he would, but did all things by the advice and counsel of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and that he pressed not much on the authority and governance of the realm, determined with herself to take upon her the rule and regiment both of the King and his kingdom, and to deprive and evict out of all authority the said Duke, then called the Lord Protector of the realm; lest men should say and report that she had neither wit nor stomach which would permit and suffer her husband, being of perfect age and man's estate, like a young scholar or innocent pupil to be governed by the disposition of another man.



John Stow

From his monument in the Church of St. Andrew, Undershaft

The Chroniclers

Hall's work was continued by RICHARD GRAFTON (*d.* 1572) and JOHN STOW (1525?–1605). Their labours as historians are not important, except for the curious documentary information which they have preserved, but Grafton was an eminent printer and publisher, who began to print the Great Bible at Paris in 1538, and completed it in England in the following year. He was for several years printer to the Crown, and lost his post for printing the procla-

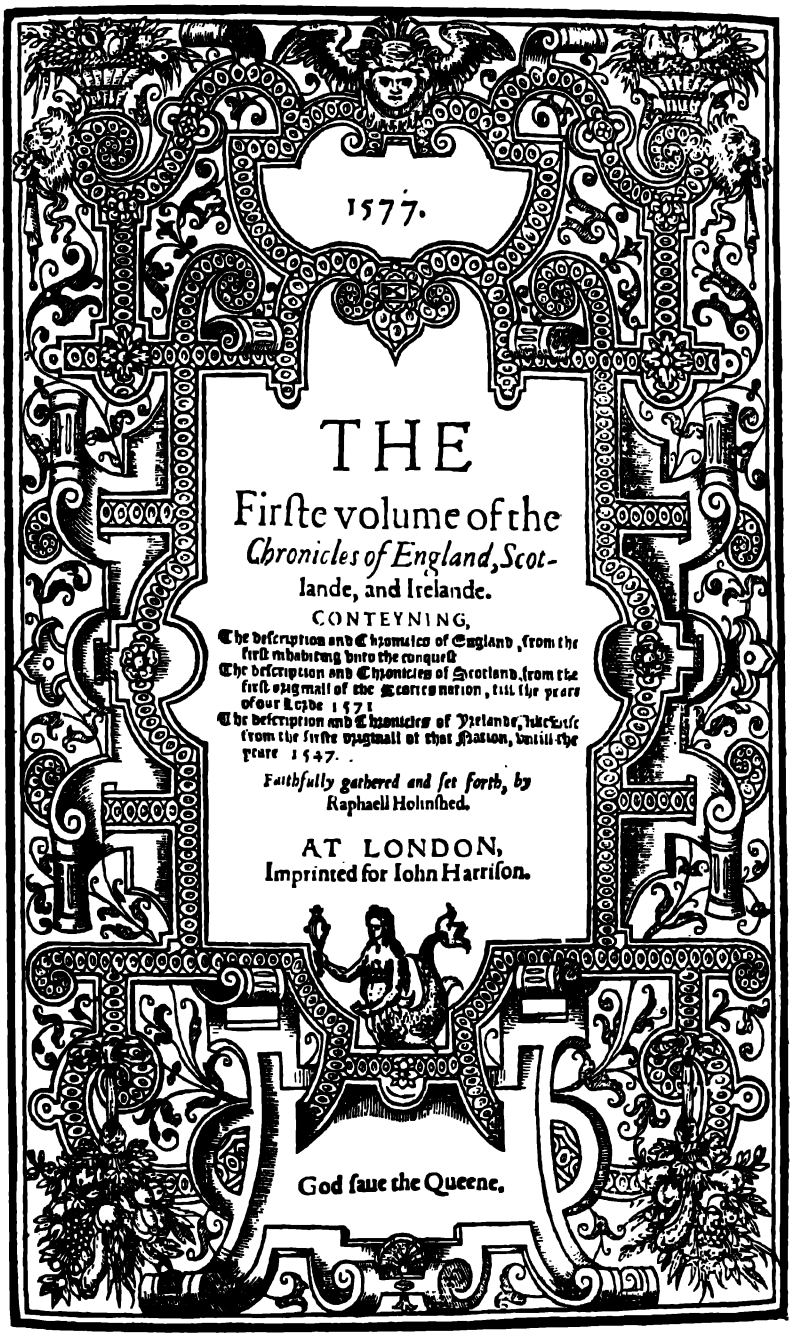
mations of Lady Jane Grey. Stow was, after Camden and Speed, the chief antiquary of his time, and his *Survey of London* (1598) is a work of the highest value. It is a curious proof of the esteem in which he was held that the poverty into which he fell in his latter years was mitigated by a special licence to beg.

Stow's *Survey* has made his name a household word. Another chronicler,

Holinshed RAPHAEL HOLINSHED (*d.* 1580 ?), has obtained the same distinction on a ground which he never designed and could not foresee—the use made of his *Chronicle* by Shakespeare, who follows it closely throughout his historical plays, sometimes merely turning it into verse. It has thus become the basis of a true national epic, a destiny of which it gave few tokens when it left the author's hands, its *forte* being rather the mass of authorities adduced than dramatic liveliness or epic dignity. The literary execution is nevertheless commendable, and there is an invaluable repertory of official documents. In partly writing, partly superintending the work, Holinshed, whose early history and connections are unknown, was labouring to carry out the plan of his deceased employer, the printer Reginald Wolfe, who had designed an encyclopædic work on the history and geography of the world, contracted after his death to more modest proportions. Holinshed found business and literary coadjutors, and brought out the work in 1576, complete to the previous year. After his death the book was re-edited with a continuation to 1586 by John Vowell, uncle of Richard Hooker. The freedom of speech in both issues caused friction with the powers that were, and although the original text has been restored in modern editions, unmutilated copies of the original ones are very scarce.

Harrison Holinshed had a valuable coadjutor in WILLIAM HARRISON (1534–1593), an Essex clergyman, and after 1586 a canon of Windsor, whose *Description of England* precedes the *Chronicle*. The testimony of this highly trustworthy work to the general improvement in the education of the upper classes has already been quoted, and Harrison is equally instructive upon all the multifarious topics touched by him. We are indebted to him for a more comprehensive and accurate view of the general tendencies of the Elizabethan era than would otherwise have been possible, and his style is invariably lively and pleasant. He also turned Bellenden's translation of Hector Boece's Latin history of Scotland from Scottish speech into English, and left behind him a voluminous chronology and a treatise on weights and measures, which still exist in MS.

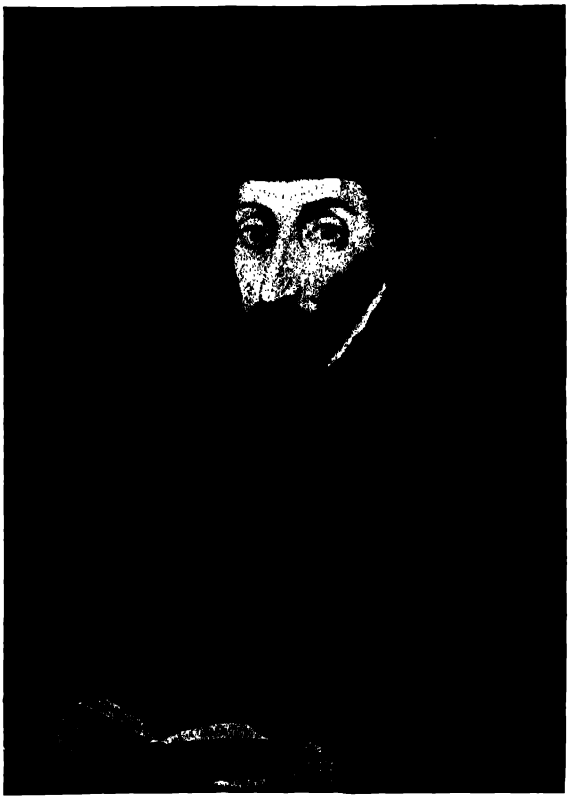
John Foxe It may be doubted whether JOHN FOXE, the Martyrologist (1516–1587), can, any more than the chroniclers, be properly reckoned among historians. As their works are merely annals, deficient in the polish and finish befitting history; so his is a collection of narratives, rather the material of history than history itself, yet almost a connected whole in virtue of unity of subject and the pervading spirit of the writer. No subject could be better adapted to call forth strength of feeling; and if *The Book of Martyrs* is grievously deficient in the calm moderation and impartiality essential to the accomplished



Title-page of Holinshed's "Chronicles," 1577

historian, such dispassionate treatment is not to be expected from one upon whose garments is still the smell of fire.

Foxe might claim with Æneas to have himself been a portion of his record. The Reformation had no more convinced or stalwart champion. Born at Boston in 1516, distinguished in boyhood for a studious turn, and sent to Oxford by friends about 1532, he soon took his place among the members of the most advanced reforming party, and in 1545 resigned the fellowship which he had gained at Magdalen in 1539 on account of his indisposition to submit to celibacy, attend chapel regularly, or take orders. Five other fellows imitated his example. They were not, as frequently stated, expelled, but, according to the record in the college register, *ex honesta causa sponte recesserunt*. As so frequently the case since, the exile for conscience' sake found a refuge in private tutorship. He appears to have been for a time in the house of the Lucys at Charlecote, where he instructed the young man destined to be carried to fame upon the pinions of Shakespeare, and married Agnes Randall, a domestic or dependant. Coming to London to push his fortune, he is represented by a probably apocryphal biography, attributed to his son, to have experienced great privations, but ultimately, in 1548, he gained the honourable post of tutor to the orphan children of the legally murdered Earl of Surrey, who had been executed in the previous year. Surrey's sister, the Duchess of Richmond, was a Protestant, and his father, as a prisoner in the Tower, was secluded from all control over his family. When released at the accession of Queen Mary, he immediately dismissed Foxe, who had, however, in the interval gained the affection of his pupils to such an extent that he continued to pay them clandestine visits, and their attachment was not dissolved even by the future Duke of Norfolk's participating in the unhappy conspiracy which brought him to the block in the days of Queen Elizabeth.



John Foxe

After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

Foxe had meanwhile written several Protestant tracts in Latin and English, and received deacon's orders from Bishop Ridley, and shortly after Mary's accession found it advisable to withdraw to the Continent. He first abode at Strasburg, where he published in Latin the first book of his great work, chiefly devoted to the lives of Wycliffe and Huss. He removed to Frankfort, and after a while, finding his residence uncomfortable on account of the quarrels between the different parties among the Reformers, migrated to Basel, where he became a reader of the press in the office of the celebrated printer and publisher Oporinus. After producing an allegorical Latin drama, *Christus Triumphans*, and an appeal for toleration, addressed to the English Government, he set to work vigorously to complete his history of religious persecution. The portion dealing with England and Scotland, still in Latin, was published in 1559, under the title *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum, maximarumque per Europam persecutionum commentarii*. An account of the persecutions in other European countries was to have followed, but Foxe relinquished this part of the undertaking, and it was subsequently added by another hand.

For some time after his return, Foxe's chief care was the translation of his Latin history into English. *The Acts and Monuments*, as the vernacular version was entitled, was published on March 20, 1563, the same day as that on which the Latin continuation appeared at Basel. The book immediately gained celebrity, fame and authority under the popular title of *The Book of Martyrs*, yet no new edition was called for until 1570, when it received the imprimatur of the Church of England in the most unmistakable fashion by a resolution of Convocation that copies should be placed in cathedral churches and in the houses of the superior clergy. Foxe's private influence as an adviser upon religious matters became very great; beyond this he could not go, for although he had taken priest's orders, scruples as admirable in their disinterestedness as deplorable for their narrowness, kept him from accepting any other preferment than a prebend at Salisbury. The rest of his life was spent usefully and honourably over various literary and theological performances. He edited the Anglo-Saxon text of the Gospels and the regulations of the reformed Church of England, he preached against the Papal bull deposing Elizabeth, he vainly interceded on behalf of victims condemned to death for anabaptism. He died in April 1587, and was buried in St. Giles's, Cripplegate, the church where Milton also is interred.

"The Book of Martyrs"

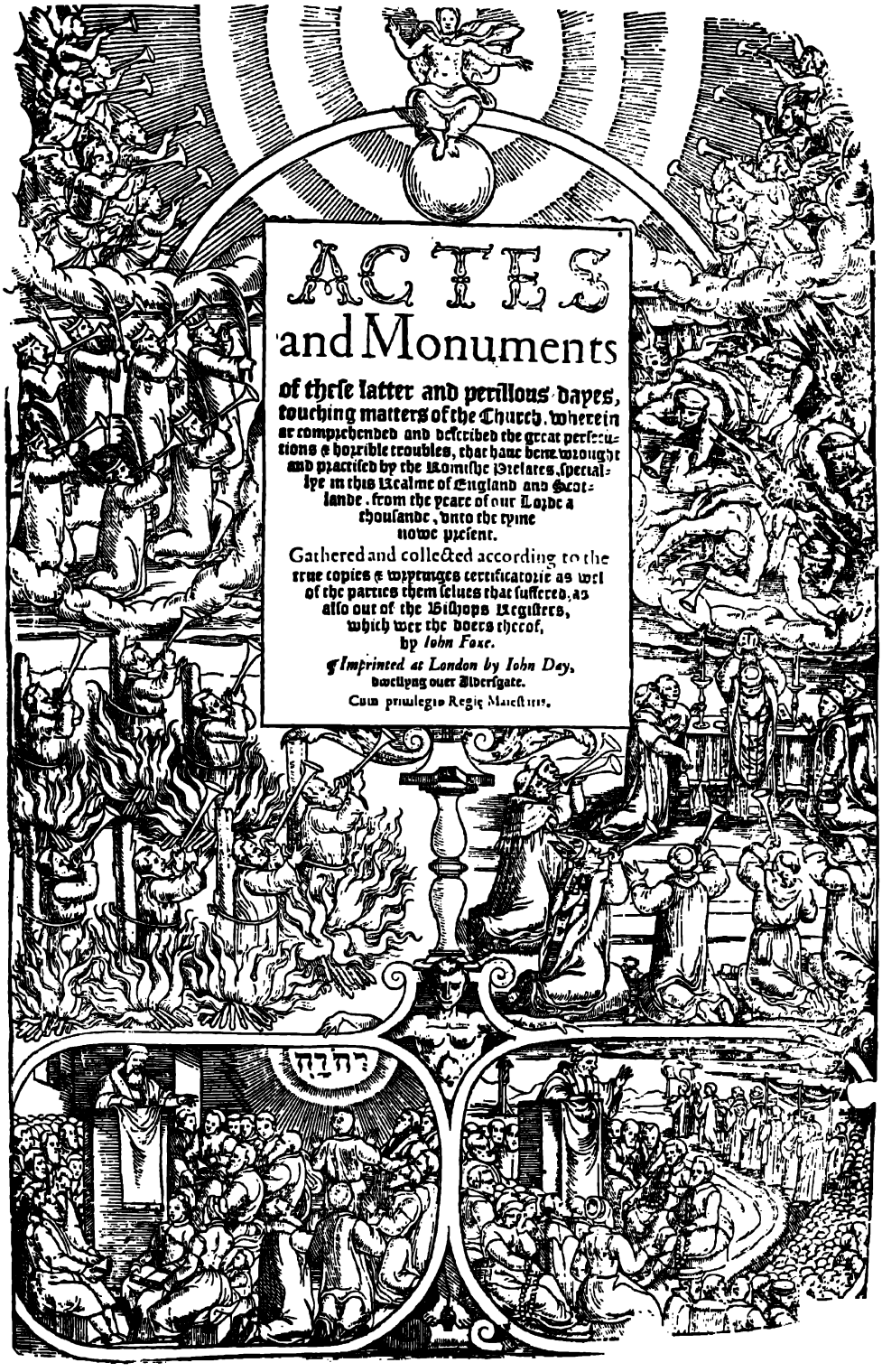
The Book of Martyrs, as it always will be called, is so thoroughly identified in the popular mind with the persecutions undergone by the Church of England in the reign of Mary that few are aware that its real title is *The Acts and Monuments*, that it professes to record all persecutions since the foundation of Christianity, and that of the eight volumes which it occupies in Canon Townsend's edition less than two treat of the persecutions of Protestants. The greater part of the work, consequently, can be little else than a compilation, and this character is unfortunately almost as applicable to the transactions of Foxe's own times as to the dim traditions of the ages of Decius and Diocletian. Foxe, having been a fugitive at the height of the Marian

persecution, had no first-hand knowledge of the course of events, and was obliged to depend mainly upon the information transmitted to him from England. This was necessarily of unequal value, nor were the circumstances of the author himself such as to render him a nice or exacting critic of the materials submitted to him. He could not but write under the influence of intense indignation, and the more he found in his authorities to justify this feeling the better satisfied he was likely to be. This is but human nature; he could no more be expected to write with studious equity and balanced moderation than, as he said when defending himself from another charge, "to fine and mince my letters and comb my head and smooth myself all the day at the glass of Cicero." It is right to scrutinise his narratives in a critical spirit, but not to prefer charges of deliberate falsification against the narrator. With all its faults, *The Book of Martyrs* is the epic of the martyr age of the Church of England, the only such age that Church has known since the times of the Danes, whose atrocities fail to impress from the obscurity and imperfection of the record. The vexations suffered from the Puritans in the seventeenth century are far below the pitch of martyrdom, and were in a measure retaliatory: in the Marian persecution, and in that only, English archbishops, bishops, and priests were burned at the instance of a foreign Church. There or nowhere will the epic be found of a Church which has never known a catastrophe, though scarcely a generation has passed without her being proclaimed to be in danger. Foxe's vigour and pathos are not unworthy of his mission; his work has gained by the use which he has made of the simple narratives of homely men. The following are characteristic examples.

DR. ROWLAND TAYLOR.

After two days, the sheriff and his company led Dr. Taylor towards Hadley; and coming within two miles of Hadley he desired to light off his horse, which done, he leaped, and set a frisk or twain, as men commonly do in dancing. "Why, master doctor," quoth the sheriff, "how do you run?" He answered, "Well, God be praised, good master sheriff, never better: for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house. But, master sheriff," said he, "shall we not go through Hadley?" "Yes," said the sheriff, "you shall go through Hadley." "Then," said he, "O good Lord! I thank thee, I shall yet once ere I die see my flock, whom thou, Lord, knowest I have most heartily loved, and truly taught. Good Lord! bless them, and keep them steadfast in thy word and truth."

When they were now come to Hadley, and came riding over the bridge, at the bridge-foot waited a poor man with five small children; who when he saw Dr. Taylor, he and his children fell down upon their knees, and held up their hands, and cried with a loud voice, and said, "O dear father and good shepherd Dr. Taylor, God help and succour thee, as thou has many a time succoured me and my poor children." Such witness had the servant of God of his virtuous and charitable alms given in his lifetime: for God would the poor should testify of his good deeds, to his singular comfort, to the example of others, and confusion of his persecutors and tyrannous adversaries. So the sheriff and others that led him to death were wonderfully astonished at this: and the sheriff sore rebuked the poor man for so crying. The streets of Hadley were beset on both sides the way with men and women of the town and country who waited to see him; whom when they beheld so led to death, with weeping



Title-page of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," 1563

eyes and lamentable voices they cried, saying one to another, "Ah, good Lord! there goeth our good shepherd from us, who so faithfully hath taught us, so fatherly hath cared for us, and so godly hath governed us. O merciful God! what shall we poor scattered lambs do? What shall come of this most wicked world? Good Lord, strengthen him and comfort him," with such other most lamentable and piteous voices. Wherefore the people were sore rebuked by the sheriff and the catchpoles his men, that led him. And Dr. Taylor evermore

The description of Smythfielde with the order and maner of certayne of the Councell, syttyng there at the burnyng of Anne Askewe and Lacels with the others.



The Burning of Anne Askew at Smithfield

From "The Book of Martyrs"

said to the people, "I have preached to you God's word and truth, and am come this day to seal it with my blood."

The Martyrdom of Thomas Haukes.

A little before his death, certain there were of his familiar acquaintance and friends, who frequented his company more familiarly, who seemed not a little to be confirmed both by the example of his constancy and by his talk; yet notwithstanding, the same again, being feared with the sharpness of the punishment which he was going to, privily desired that in the midst of the flames, he would show them, if he could, some token whereby they might be the more certain whether the pain of such burning were so great that a man might not therein keep his mind quiet and patient. Which thing he promised them to do, and so, secretly between them, it was agreed that if the rage of the pain were tolerable and might be suffered, then he should lift up his hands

above his head towards heaven before he gave up the ghost. Not long after, when the hour was come, Thomas Haukes was led away to the place appointed for the slaughter, by the Lord Riche and his assistants, who, being now come unto the stake, mildly and patiently addressed himself to the fire, having a strait chain cast about his middle, with no small multitude of people on every side compassing him about: unto whom after he had spoken many things, especially unto the Lord Riche, reasoning with him of the innocent blood of the saints; at length after his fervent prayers first made and poured out unto God, the fire was set unto him. In the which when he continued long, and when his speech was taken away by violence of the flame, his skin also drawn together, and his fingers consumed with the fire, so that now all men thought certainly that he had been gone, suddenly, and contrary to all expectation, the blessed servant of God, being mindful of his promise afore made, reached up his hands burning on a light fire, which was marvellous to behold, over his head to the living God, and with great rejoicing, as it seemed, struck or clapped them three times together. At he sight whereof here followed such applause and outcry of the people, and especially of them which understood the matter, that the like hath not commonly been heard, and you would have thought heaven and earth to have come togethe . And so the blessed man, martyr of Christ, straightway sinking down into the fire, gave up his spirit, A.D. 1555, June 10. And thus have you plainly and expressly described unto you the whole story as well of the life as of the death of Thomas Haukes, a most constant and faithful witness of Christ's holy gospel.

Foxe and the Church of England

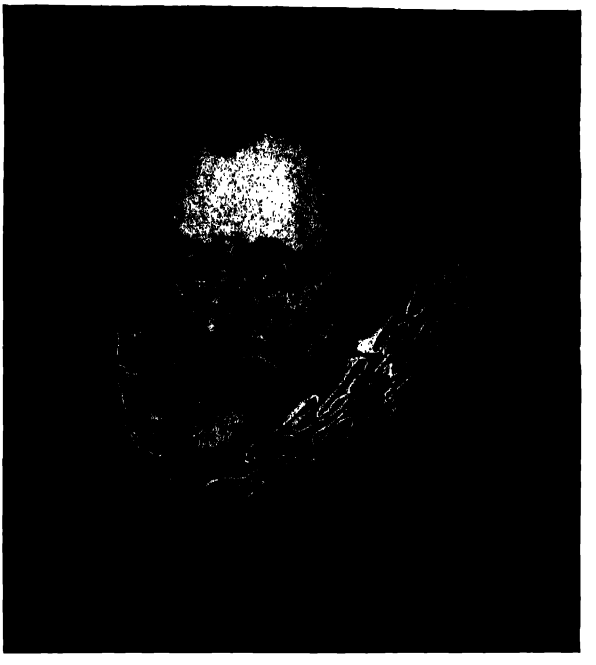
Besides its other claims to notice, Foxe's book is remarkable as, with the exception of Hooker's, the one theological work of the age which has a place in literature. In scarcely any other period of our history has religious controversy aroused more interest, or the proportion of theological publications been so considerable; but the controversialists were too strictly professional, and sermons and devotional works fell below the level of literature. Bishop Jewel's *Apologia pro Ecclesia Anglicana* was indeed a great work, but as the gainsayers wrote in Latin, the apologist must imitate them, and the translation, by Lady Bacon, mother of the Chancellor, failed to obtain the classical position in English literature which the original had acquired in divinity. The theological unrest, nevertheless, was indirectly of great service to literature by the spirit of keen inquiry which it fostered and the patriotic scorn of Roman pretensions which inspires so much of our contemporary literature, and finds poetical expression in Shakespeare's *King John*. It has been well said that Pope Pius V.'s deposition of Elizabeth in 1570 signalises the liberation of the English mind in every department of the intellectual life. A very few years previously the ecclesiastical authorities had issued a thanksgiving for the relief of Malta, without a word to indicate consciousness of any difference between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Churches of the Continent, but after Pius's ill-advised step, promptly followed by Babington's conspiracy and the St. Bartholomew, nothing of the kind is to be found. It could not be supposed, however, that the spirit of inquiry would be satisfied with the repudiation of Papal pretensions. Ere long, the conflict between Anglican and Puritan became still more lively, penetrating every university college, and producing shoals of Marprelate tracts and similar scurrilities, far below literary rank, yet not unimportant as preludes to the free newspaper press of later generations. The publication abroad

of Roman Catholic writings, especially by Cardinal Allen and the Jesuit Parsons, contributed towards the same end. On the whole, however, the divines of the sixteenth century, except in zeal and erudition, rank below their successors of the next age. Archbishop MATTHEW PARKER (1504–1575) is, indeed, entitled to the highest praise as the munificent and enlightened patron of learning, the principal agent in the production of the Bishops' Bible, and the preserver of much Anglo-Saxon and other ancient literature; but his chief work, *De Antiquitate Ecclesiæ et Privilegiis Ecclesiæ Cantuariensis*, is in Latin. Nor were the departments of literature most nearly allied to theology fertile in eminent writers. RICHARD MULCASTER, successively headmaster of Merchant Taylors' and of St. Paul's (1530?–1611), was probably a better practical educationist than Roger Ascham, but ranks much lower as an author.

As a rule, an author whose works have been originally composed in Latin, and subsequently rendered into English, cannot claim to be accounted an English author, unless the translation has been made by himself. We have had, nevertheless, to recognise exceptions to this rule in Mandeville and Sir Thomas More, and a third and hardly less important one must be made in the person of WILLIAM CAMDEN, whose *Britannia* and *Annals*, though written in Latin, are so intensely English in spirit that the question of language becomes of minor importance. There is, moreover, reason to believe that the translation of the former by Philemon Holland, though not Camden's own, was made under his direction. It is, at all events, certain that Camden's work as a topographer was more important than that which had gained an honourable place in literature for his predecessor Leland; and that he was the first English historian of contemporary events who rose above the grade of a chronicler.

Camden's life was that of a schoolmaster and an antiquary. He was born in London on May 2, 1551; his father, a native of Lichfield, is described as a painter, but seems to have followed his profession rather as a trade than as an art. Camden was educated at Christ's Hospital and at St. Paul's School, and seems to have been helped through Oxford partly by friends, partly as a servitor or chorister at Magdalen College. He afterwards studied at Pembroke and Christ Church, but did not obtain a degree. Even then he showed a strong inclination to antiquarian pursuits, in which he was encouraged by a fellow student at Christ Church, Philip Sidney. After leaving the University he travelled much through the country, collecting antiquarian particulars, but his means of support seem obscure until, in 1575, he was appointed assistant-master at Westminster School. He became headmaster in 1593, but in 1597 retired upon being appointed Clarenceux King-of-Arms, which seems to have been considered the higher dignity, and was certainly more congenial to one who had spent all his holiday time in antiquarian journeys. He, nevertheless, distinguished himself as a schoolmaster by the production of a Greek grammar, which continued in use at Westminster for more than two centuries. The first edition of his *Britannia* had been published in 1586, the last published in his lifetime appeared in 1607. His other great work,

the *Annals* of the reign of Elizabeth, was published down to 1589 in 1615; the second part, completing the book, did not appear till after the author's death. Both these great works were in Latin, but translations were speedily provided, and the former has had three, the standard version by Gough, with copious additions, appearing in 1789. Camden also collected the epitaphs in Westminster Abbey, edited Asser and other ancient historians, and performed much other antiquarian work. In personal character he was gentle, simple, and unworldly, and his industry was prodigious. In his latter years he resided principally at Chislehurst, where he died on November 9, 1623. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

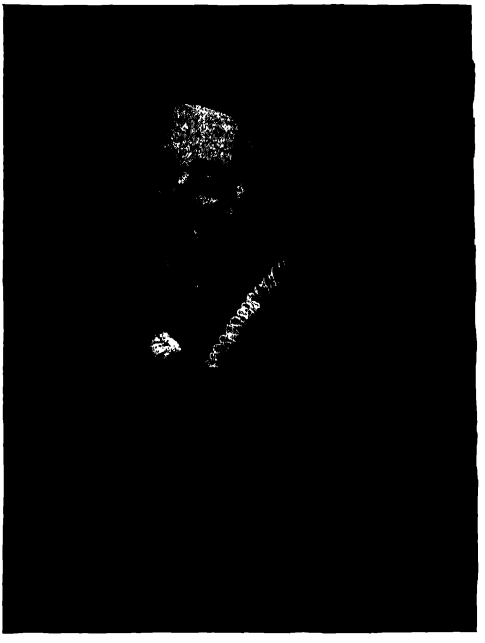


William Camden
After the portrait by Mark Gheeraedts

Of Camden's two chief works, the *Britannia* belongs to the class of monumental achievements which form great literary landmarks without being in themselves literature. Continuing the succession of Leland, it marks the definitive acceptance of antiquarianism as a branch of culture, while its own spirit is rather scientific than literary. The essence of literary grace is tasteful selection, but the topographer must be exhaustive. Pausanias probably provided but dry reading for his own age: if it be otherwise now, it is from the consciousness that so much of what he saw can never be seen again. The piety of Pausanias was piety in the strictest sense of the term: Camden treads in the vestiges, not of the gods, but of the historians. "My first and principal design," he says, "was to trace out and rescue from obscurity those places which had been mentioned by Cæsar, Tacitus, Ptolemy, Antoninus Augustus, the Notitiæ Provinciarum, and other ancient writers." He also confined himself to the most illustrious families, thus incurring the displeasure of upstarts. Altogether, he left so much untold that his translator, Gough, spent seven years in rendering and supplementing him, and nine more in seeing him through the press. Gough's additions are frequently more interesting than the text, but want the charm of Camden's stately diction, a legacy from the original Latin.

It has rarely happened that a book of worth, not lost or grievously

mutilated, has failed of meet recognition from posterity. If there ever has been such a case, it has been that of Camden's second great work, the *Annals of Queen Elizabeth.* All circumstances might have seemed to conspire in its favour: the theme, which might confer the distinction of a national prose epic upon a book of less worth; the real merit of the execution; the very fact of its being a translation from the Latin, which brings the style nearer to that of our own day. England might have been thought the least likely of all nations to neglect a relation of one of the most glorious epochs of her history; or at least, had the mutations of taste brought about a temporary eclipse, Camden might have been expected to have shared in the great Elizabethan revival of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, there has been no edition of the Latin original since 1717, or of either of the English translations since a still earlier period. Few Englishmen know that the patient antiquary produced a book worthy to rank with Shakespeare's historical plays and Hakluyt's records of voyages as a true prose epic. Merely considered as an historian, Camden is far above mediocrity; his work, but for the excessive space accorded to the trial and execution of Mary Stuart, is well proportioned, and shows acquaintance with the best models; few annalists have so successfully avoided the annalist's habitual dryness. The merit, nevertheless, is rather moral than literary, consisting in the fine glow of patriotic feeling which throughout maintains the narrative at epical height, while the treatment of enemies is fair and courteous. The work has the inestimable advantage of being composed at a period neither too near to nor too remote from the transactions described; written under James, it is a retrospect taken when calm judgment had ceased to be obscured by contemporary passions. The execution is singularly even, there are few great passages, but there is the cumulative charm of the ceaseless and orderly procession of picturesque details, the glory of the times rather than of the author, whose skill is mainly conspicuous in the judicious marshalling of them, and in the skill with which Elizabeth, with more poetical than historical truth, is made throughout the dominant figure, the life and soul of every undertaking. One reason of the neglect of the work may be its character as a translation, although its adoption into the national literature proves



John Speed
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

that a foreign origin need be no insuperable bar. The existing versions, one of which is made from the French, are respectable rather than brilliant; a new translation, conformable to the best modern standard, would be an undertaking worthy of a scholar and a patriot. The following extracts are fair examples of Camden's style, as he appears in his translator Norton :

The Taking of Calais by the Spaniards.

In the midst of these tumults of Ireland, Albert, Archduke of Austria and Cardinal, whom the Spaniard had made Governor of the Netherlands, suddenly withdrew the Queen's mind from Irish matters. For as soon as he had taken upon him the government, he gathered together the Spania ds' forces as if he proposed to raise the siege at La Fere, a town of Picardy, and beyond the opinion of all men turned aside to Calais and besieged it, and having the first day taken the castle of Newenham, became master of the haven. As soon as the Queen heard by the fearful messenger of the French king that Calais was besieged, she commanded a power of men to be gathered, that very day being Sunday, while men were at divine service, to aid the French king, and in that provide for the safety of England. For she could not but suspect that England might be burned with the fire in her neighbour's country. This army hastily raised she committed to Essex. But before they were shipped, she had certain advertisement that both the town and the castle were yielded up into the Spaniards' hands, for when with the mutual thundering of the ordnance, the report of which was heard as far as Greenwich, the Archduke Albert had shaken the walls, the townsmen withdrew themselves to the castle, which within few days also was easily taken with great slaughter of the French. Hereupon was the English army presently discharged, and some money lent unto the French king, the Dukes of Bouillon and Sancy passing their words for the same.



Sir Thomas Bodley

Character of Burghley.

When she was Queen, he was made a privy counsellor and secretary : and after the decease of Sir Thomas Parry she gave him the office of Master of the Wards in the third year of her reign. Which place he executed, as he did all his other, providently for the benefit of his prince and the wards, for his own profit moderately, and for the benefit of his own followers bountifully, yet without offence, and in all hings with great commendation for his integri y, insomuch that the Queen admiring his wisdom committed in a manner the managing of the whole state unto him. His prudence and fidelity in the weightiest businesses having been approved the space of full thirteen years, the Queen honoured him with the title of Baron of Burghley, and then made him Lord High Treasurer of England. In which office, detesting to scrape money together by bad practices,

he increased, as his private estate, so also the public treasure, by his industry and parsimony. For he hardly suffered anything to be expended for the Queen's Majesty's honour and the defence of the realm, or the relieving of our neighbours. He looked strictly, yet not roughly, to the farmers of the customs. He never liked, as he was wont to say, that the treasury should grow as the spleen, and the rest of the members languish, and herein he happily bent his best endeavours that both prince and people might grow rich together, saying oftentimes that nothing is profitable to a prince which is not joined with honour. Wherefore he would have no rents raised upon lands, nor old farmers and tenants put out. Which also he observed in his own private estate, which he managed with that integrity that he never sued any man, and no man ever sued him. But I will not go too far in his praises, yet may I say truly that he was in the number of those few who have both lived and died with glory.

In the realms of antiquarianism Camden had in his day no competitor, but he did not stand alone. The painstaking Stow has already been mentioned along with the chroniclers, and his archæology was better than his history. JOHN SPEED (1552?–1629) raised antiquarianism more nearly to the dignity of history, and, having anticipated Camden's *Annals* by four years by the publication of *The History of Great Britain* in 1611, has some claim to rank as the first English historian. He also had great merit as a chartographer. Sir THOMAS BODLEY and Sir ROBERT BRUCE COTTON, though not eminent as writers, immortalised their names as benefactors to learning. The great scientific glories of their country in this age, WILLIAM GILBERT, the discoverer of magnetism, and WILLIAM HARVEY, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, wrote entirely in Latin.



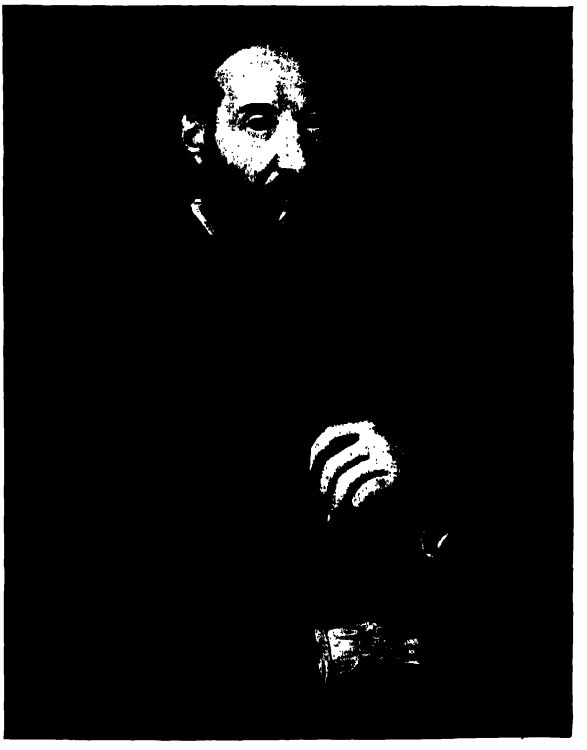
Sir Robert Cotton

From a print after the portrait by Paul van Somer

It has been already remarked that the first standard histories produced in England partake largely of the nature of memoirs. The same is true of one of the two chief contributions to Scottish history produced in the reign of Elizabeth, both works never to be forgotten, but only in one instance claiming a place in British literature. "Charm" is not a term frequently applicable to iconoclastic JOHN KNOX (1505–1572), but it is fully merited by the autobiographic portion of his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*. In general this celebrated book cannot be other than a party manifesto, and few such manifestoes have been more virulent and abusive. It is not on that account to be deemed unveracious. It bears throughout the impress of

entire conviction; its vivid portraits of the author's adversaries no less than of his friends bear every internal evidence of accuracy; and, without effort or conscious intention, the author is especially successful in painting himself to the life. His celebrated account of his discourse to Mary, Queen of Scots, for example, depicts the man who united the statesman to the prophet, a John the Baptist who would have been a match for Herod and Herodias together, and in whom the iron rigour of a Calvin was tempered by something of the geniality of a Luther:

> The Queen looked about to some of the reporters, and said, "Your words are sharp enough as you have spoken them, but yet they were told to me in another manner. I know that my uncles and you are not of one religion, and therefore I cannot blame you albeit you have no good opinion of them. But if you hear anything of myself that mislikes you, come to myself and tell me, and I shall hear you."
>
> "Madam," quoth he, "I am assured that your uncles are enemies to God and unto his son Jesus Christ, and that for maintenance of their own pomp and worldly glory they spare not to spill the blood of many innocents; and therefore I am assured that their enterprises shall have no better success than others have had that before them have done that they do now. But as to your own personage, Madam, I would be glad to do all that I could to your Grace's contentment, provided that I exceed not the bounds of my vocation. I am called, Madam, to a public function within the Kirk of God, and am appointed by God to rebuke the sins and vices of all. I am not appointed to come to every man in particular to show him his offence; for that labour were infinite. If your Grace please to frequent the public sermons, then doubt I not but you shall fully understand both what I like and mislike, as well in your Majesty as in all others. Or if your Grace will assign unto me a certain day and hour when it will please you to hear the form and substance of doctrine which is propounded in public to the churches of this realm, I will most gladly await upon your Grace's pleasure, time, and place. But to wait upon your chamber-door, or elsewhere, and then to have no further liberty but to whisper my mind into your Grace's ear, or to tell to you what others think and speak of you, neither will my conscience nor the vocation whereto God hath called me suffer it. For albeit at your Grace's



John Knox

After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

commandment I am here now, yet cannot I tell what other men shall judge of me. that at this time of day am absent from my book and waiting upon the Court."

"You will not always," said she, "be at your book," and so turned her back. And the said John Knox departed with a reasonable merry countenance, whereat some Papists offended said, "He is not affrayed." Which heard of him, he answered, "Why should the pleasing face of a gentle woman affray me? I have looked into the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been affrayed above measure." And so he left the Queen and the Court for that time.

The influence of GEORGE BUCHANAN (1506–1582) upon his country was only second to that of Knox: as her national historian, ablest political writer, and chief representative of the humanities. In every circumstance of his life he is interesting; most so, perhaps, as the antagonist of the divine right of kings while directing the education of the future King of Great Britain and Ireland. His honourable poverty leaves no doubt of the sincerity of his convictions; whether he did or did not promote good ends by wicked means is a problem no nearer solution than when it was first broached. Had he written his *History* and his *De Jure Regni* in the Scotch vernacular he might have given this racy dialect permanent rank as a literary language; but he was too proud of his consummate Latin, and, perhaps, judged wisely in resolving not to forfeit his fame and influence upon the Continent. Take him altogether, in his scholarship, his wanderings, his perils from the Inquisition, his free thought in politics and, perhaps, in religion, his studious life and loose verses, he is as perfect a type of the Renaissance man of letters as the Renaissance can show.



George Buchanan
From an old engraving

Contemporaneously with Buchanan, Scotland had a delightful gossiping chronicler in ROBERT LYNDESAY of Pitscottie; a fair historian of modern times in Bishop JOHN LESLIE of Ross; and a lively memoir-writer in Sir JOHN MELVILLE, gentleman of the chamber to Mary Stuart, whose graphic account of Queen Elizabeth's inquisitiveness about his mistress is familiar to most readers.

Few writers of the age of Elizabeth have left a more enviable reputation than one who, though endowed with a fine style and a weighty cast of thought, wrote little, but edited much. The life of RICHARD HAKLUYT (1552?–1616) was consecrated to two purposes equally patriotic: that of preserving the memory of his countrymen's exploits in fields of travel and adventure, and of indicating further means for the promotion of the wealth and commerce of the nation. These he sought to promote by collecting and printing the unpublished narratives of English explorers of all parts of the world, adding translations by himself and others of the relations of foreign voyagers where

THE PRINCIPAL NAVIGATIONS, VOIAGES, TRAFFIQVES AND DISCOVERIES of the English Nation, made by Sea or ouer-land, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the Earth, at any time within the compasse of these 1500. yeeres: Deuided into three seuerall Volumes, according to the positions of the Regions, whereunto they were directed.

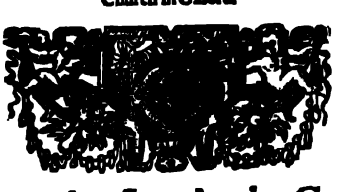
This first Volume containing the woorthy Discoueries, &c. of the English toward the North and Northeast by sea, as of *Lapland*, *Scrikfinia*, *Corelia*, the Baie of S. *Nicolas*, the Isles of *Colgoieue*, *Vaigatz*, and *Noua Zembla*, toward the great riuer *Ob*, with the mighty Empire of *Russia*, the *Caspian* sea, *Georgia*, *Armenia*, *Media*, *Persia*, *Boghar* in *Bactria*, and diuers kingdoms of *Tartaria*:

Together with many notable monuments and testimonies of the ancient forren trades, and of the warrelike and other shipping of this realme of *England* in former ages.

Whereunto is annexed also a briefe Commentarie of the true state of *Island*, and of the Northren Seas and lands situate that way.

And lastly, the memorable defeate of the Spanish huge Armada, Anno 1588. and the famous victorie atchieued at the citie of *Cadiz*, *1596.* are described.

By RICHARD HAKLVYT *Master of* Artes, and sometime Student of Christ-Church in Oxford.



Imprinted at London by GEORGE BISHOP, RALPH NEWBERIE and ROBERT BARKER.

1598

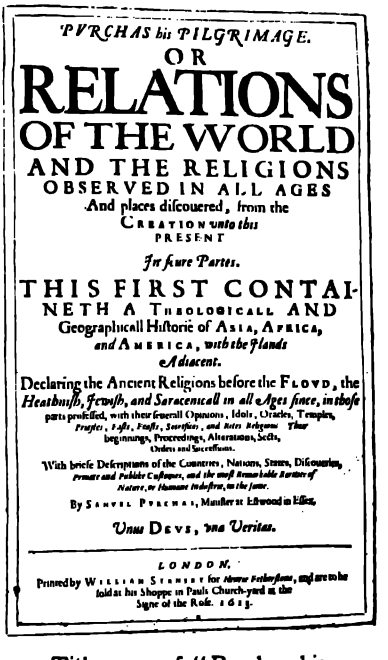
Title-page of Hakluyt's "Voyages" 1598

these appeared to his purpose. He took up this idea at Oxford, whither he proceeded from Westminster School in 1570, reading eagerly "whatever printed or written discoveries and voyages I find extant, either in Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portugal, French, or English languages." Entering the Church he obtained a prebend at Westminster and other preferment, but nothing diverted him from the main purpose of his life. After translating French accounts of voyages to Florida and editing Peter Martyr, he published in 1589 his *Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*: a collection enlarged to three volumes in the edition of 1598–1600. The first volume contains voyages to the northern regions, Russia and Tartary; the second, voyages to India and the East in general; the third, which is considerably the largest, voyages to the New World. The collection begins somewhat inauspiciously with a grave notice of King Arthur's expedition against Iceland, A.D. 517, but, this little tribute to Myth discharged, we find ourselves traversing Tartary with the no less authentic than picturesque Carpini, and the book is henceforth a treasury of delight, be the narrators English or foreign. The former, nevertheless, so greatly preponderate that no English book after Shakespeare's historical plays better deserves the character of a national epic, and, notwithstanding the diversity of style, similarity of subject and community of spirit supply the needful unity. It has always exerted, and in the more popular edition recently announced must exert still more signally, the happiest influence upon the national character. Besides this great end, Hakluyt aimed at organising discovery under a central authority, resembling the Spanish *Casa* at Seville; but such methodical control was too alien to the English genius to be carried into effect. He continued to interest himself in mercantile and colonising enterprises, advising the directors of the East India Company, largely concerned in the settlement of Virginia, and translating De Soto's travels in that country. He died in 1616, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Hakluyt is so excellent a writer that it is to be wished he had written more. The following is from a letter to Raleigh, dated May 1, 1587, encouraging him to persevere in his Virginian enterprise, and indulging in over-sanguine anticipations of the liberality of good Queen Bess:

> Moreover there is none other likelihood but that her Majesty, which hath christened and given the name to your Virginia, if need require, will deal after the manner of honourable godmothers, which, seeing their gossips not fully able to bring up their children themselves, are wont to contribute to their honest education, the rather if they find any towardliness or reasonable hope of goodness in them. And if Elizabeth, Queen of Castile and Aragon, after her husband Ferdinando and she had emptied their coffers and exhausted their treasures in subduing the Kingdom of Granada and rooting the Moors, a wicked weed, out of Spain, was nevertheless so zealous of God's honour that (as Fernando Columbus, the son of Christopher Columbus, recordeth in the history of the deeds of his father), she laid part of her own jewels, which she had in great account, to gage, to furnish his father food upon his first voyage, before any foot of land of all the West Indies was discovered, what may we expect of our most magnificent and gracious prince Elizabeth of England, into whose lap the Lord hath most plentifully thrown his treasures; what may we, I say, hope

of her forwardness and bounty in advancing of this your most honourable enterprise, being far more certain than that of Columbus, and tending no less to the glory of God than that action of the Spaniards? A wise philosopher noting the sundry desires of divers men writeth, that if an ox be put into a meadow he will seek to fill his belly with grass, if a stork be cast in she will seek for snakes, if you turn in a hound he will seek to start a hare: so sundry men entering into these discoveries propose to themselves several ends. Some seek authority and places of commandment; others experience, by seeing of the world, the most part worldly and transitory gain, and that oftentimes by dishonest and unlawful means, the fewer number the glory of God and the saving of the souls of the poor and blinded infidels. Yet because divers honest and well-disposed persons are entered already into this your business, and that I know you mean hereafter to send some such good Churchmen thither as may truly say with the Apostle, to the savages, We seek not yours but you, I conceive great comfort of the success of this your action, hoping that the Lord, whose power is wont to be perfected in weakness, will bless the foundations of this your building. Only be you of a valiant courage and faint not, as the Lord said unto Joshua, exhorting him to proceed on forward in the conquest of the land of promise, and remember that private men have happily wielded and waded through as great enterprises as this, with lesser meanes than those which God in his mercy hath bountifully bestowed upon you to the singular good, as I assure myself of this our Commonwealth wherein you live.


PVRCHAS his PILGRIMAGE.
OR
RELATIONS
OF THE WORLD
AND THE RELIGIONS
OBSERVED IN ALL AGES
And places discouered, from the
CREATION unto this
PRESENT
In foure Partes.
THIS FIRST CONTAI-
NETH A THEOLOGICALL AND
Geographicall Historie of ASIA, AFRICA,
and AMERICA, with the Ilands
Adiacent.
Declaring the Ancient Religions before the FLOVD, the
Heathnish, Iewish, and Saracenicall in all Ages since, in those
parts professed, with their funerall Opinions, Idols, Oracles, Temples,
Prophets, Lyfe, Exeqs, Sacrifices, and Rites Religious. Their
beginnings, Proceedings, Alterations, Sects,
Orders and Successions.
With briefe Descriptions of the Countries, Nations, States, Discoueries,
Private and Publike Customes, and the most Remarkable Rarities of
Nature, or Humane Industrie, in the same.
By SAMVEL PVRCHAS, Minister at Eltwood in Essex.
Vnus DEVS, vna Veritas.
LONDON.
Printed by WILLIAM STANSBY for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be
sold at his Shoppe in Pauls Church-yard at the
Signe of the Rose. 1613.

Title-page of "Purchas his Pilgrimage" 1613

The mantle of Hakluyt can hardly be said to have fallen upon SAMUEL PURCHAS (1575?–1626), even though he became possessed of many of Hakluyt's manuscripts, continued his labours, and was, like Hakluyt, an Essex, afterwards a London, clergyman. But the abstracts he made of voyages, when they can be compared with the originals, seem meagre; and, when they cannot, he labours under the imputation of having suffered his materials to be lost. As, however, he died only a year after the publication of his collection, it may be reasonable as well as charitable to ascribe their disappearance to the negligence of his heirs. *Purchas his Pilgrimage* was published in 1613, in four volumes, and, with all its defects, there is magic in the sound. Though far inferior in interest and literary merit to Hakluyt, it has preserved much that might have perished without it, and has laid English poetry under a great obligation by inspiring Coleridge with his *Kubla Khan*. The first line of this magical fragment is taken literally from Purchas, only altering "Xamdu" into "Xanadu," *metri gratia;* and the verbal resemblance for several lines is sufficiently close to arouse scepticism of the alleged origination of the poem from a trance. "Alph the sacred river," however, does not run in Purchas, nor is the dulcimer of the Abyssinian maid audible in him.

The spirit of RICHARD KNOLLES (1550 ? –1610), the historian of the Turks, is so sympathetic with that of Hakluyt and Purchas, that he is, perhaps, better mentioned along with them than with historians. He translates and adapts, with no pretension to original research, but with the zest of a voyager or a romancer. Having distinguished himself at Oxford, he was brought by a patron to Sandwich as headmaster of the grammar-school, and filled the post until his death. His spirited style has earned him high, perhaps exaggerated, praise from Johnson, Southey, and Byron, and some strokes in Shelley's sublime vision of the storming of Constantinople in his *Hellas* seem to indicate that Knolles's description was not unknown to him. Knolles's history was in 1680 continued to 1677 by Sir PAUL RYCAUT (1628–1700), a man qualified by long diplomatic experience in the country, who also accompanied it with a valuable commentary in his *Present State of Turkey* (1668).



John Gerard
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

An age in which both the objects of knowledge and the facilities for its acquisition had so greatly multiplied as the Elizabethan was certain to abound in technical treatises. Excellent books for the time, original and translated, were produced on medicine, agriculture, music, mathematics, map-making, horsemanship, fencing, and the military art; but few of them can be deemed entitled to a place in literature. An exception may be made in behalf of one of especial celebrity, the *Herbal* of JOHN GERARD (1545–1612). Gerard, a native of Cheshire, member, and ultimately Master, of the Company of Barber Surgeons, made and published (1596) a catalogue of the plants in his own garden in Holborn, the first instance on record. He was then Superintendent of the gardens of Lord Burghley, to whom he dedicated his *Herbal*, published in the following year. It is in the main a translation of the *Pemptades* of Dodoens, begun by another hand, and nearly all the eighteen hundred woodcuts are imported from Germany. Gerard's additions, nevertheless, are valuable, and no subsequent



Title-page of Gerard's "Herbal" 1633

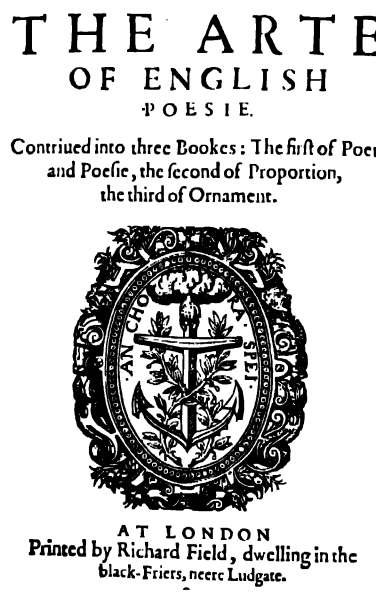
herbalist has disputed his pre-eminence, unless from the point of view of medicine.

Another technical writer, having like Gerard given his country the first work she possessed on an important subject, gained an honourable place in literature by labour of quite another kind. REGINALD SCOT (1538?–1599), in spite of his name not a Scotchman but a Kentishman, laudably interested in the staple product of his county, published in 1574 the first practical treatise on the cultivation of hops. Ten years afterwards he produced his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, a sagacious and courageous, but for long an ineffectual, exposure of the baleful superstition which had destroyed so many innocent victims. Few books of the time do both the head and the heart of the writer more real honour. King James, upon his accession, ordered it to be burned, but, from allusions in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare seems to have taken the liberty to keep a copy.

Another group of technical writers deserve fuller treatment, those who occupied themselves with the technique of literary composition. The one man of genius among them has already been noticed, but Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* is an inspiration rather than a treatise, an example of poetry rather than a disquisition upon it. The most serious attempt at a critical judgment of poetry is the anonymous *Art of English Poetry*, published in 1589, and attributed on by no means conclusive authority to one of two brothers named PUTTENHAM, nephews of Sir Thomas Elyot. If by either, the elder brother, Richard, who travelled much on the Continent, seems the more likely candidate, though it is usually ascribed to George. We must acknowledge grave doubt whether it can be rightly attributed to either. Both appear to have been troublesome characters, continually engaged in broils and contentions, and unlikely to have held such an office about the Queen's person as the author of the treatise is stated to have enjoyed. Richard Puttenham had been banished for many years for a serious offence; and George, in a vindication of Elizabeth's conduct to Mary Stuart, which was certainly written by him, makes no mention of holding any office at Court; nor is such alluded to in the will of either of the brothers. Whoever the author may have been, the treatise possesses considerable merit, and is evidently the work of a well-bred man of wide reading and good taste. It is divided into three books, treating respectively of the essential character of poetry, its "proportion," including metrical law, and the ornaments of trope and figure of speech. The passages most attractive to the modern reader are its allusions to early English poets and its stores of contemporary anecdote.

The Art of English Poetry had been three years anticipated by WILLIAM WEBBE in his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, written when the author, who seems to have been born about 1552, was a tutor in Essex. His work is not, like *The Art*, a formal treatise on poetical composition, but a review of the condition of English poetry at his time mainly in its technical aspect, comprising, nevertheless, interesting allusions to living authors, and manifesting a creditable appreciation of the worth of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.

Without altogether condemning rhyme, Webbe thinks that the condition of English poetry would be more satisfactory if the classical metres had been naturalised from the first, and appends versions of two of Virgil's eclogues by himself as specimens, as well as a transposition of one of Spenser's lyrics into sapphics. The force of pedantry could no further go, and yet, when off his hobby, Webbe is a judicious writer. He was greatly influenced by GABRIEL HARVEY (1545?–1630), long a prominent figure at Cambridge, a personage of such great authority and so little taste that he actually persuaded the inventor of the Spenserian stanza to write for a time in hexameters and pentameters. He was unquestionably a man of much ability, but is now chiefly remembered by his familiar letters and his acrimonious controversies with Greene and Nash, terminated by the decree that "all Nash's books and Dr. Harvey's books be taken wheresoever they may be found, and that none of the same books be ever printed hereafter." FRANCIS MERES (1565–1647), clergyman and schoolmaster, added to his compilation of choice sentences, *Palladis Tamia* (1598), "a comparative discourse of our English poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian," which has laid posterity under everlasting obligation by its notice of Shakespeare and Marlowe. The attacks on the stage made by STEPHEN GOSSON (1565–1624) are only noteworthy as having called forth Sidney's *Apology* and Lodge's *Defence*, and as illustrating Disraeli's apophthegm concerning critics, for Gosson had been an unsuccessful author and dramatist before becoming a clergyman.


THE ARTE
OF ENGLISH
POESIE.

Contriued into three Bookes: The firſt of Poets and Poeſie, the ſecond of Proportion, the third of Ornament.

AT LONDON
Printed by Richard Field, dwelling in the black-Friers, neere Ludgate.

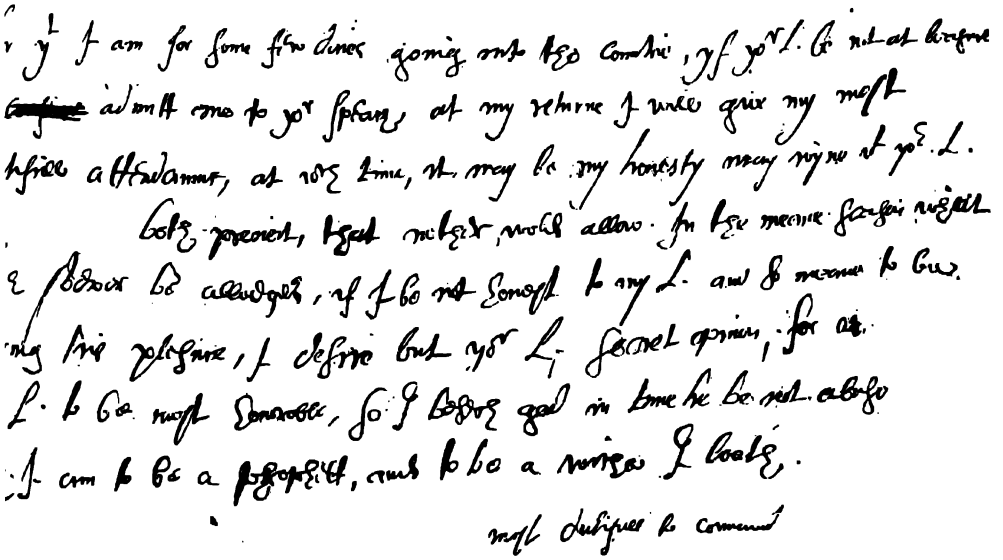
Title-page of Puttenham's "Arte of English Poesie"

Among the most remarkable phenomena of literature must be reckoned the slow development of pure fiction in all nations. In the days of Elizabeth, English novelists were still very much at the point reached in the third and fourth Christian centuries by the Greek erotic romancers: their notion of a novel was still that of a love tale crowded with improbable adventures, and setting history and geography at defiance. The vast possibilities of the social novel with a purpose had as yet dawned upon no one, and perhaps could hardly be expected to do so while the field was efficiently occupied by comedy. More's *Utopia* was perhaps as yet the only example of didactic prose fiction, although the romantic tale had long before been naturalised in verse by Gower, and romances of knight-errantry, transplanted from the domain of poetry, were greatly in vogue. Another kind of fiction which

had arisen in Italy, the short story exhibiting manners and sometimes ridiculing follies or vices, had found its way into English literature through Chaucer, and was about to influence the drama by supplying playwrights with plots, but had rarely effected an entrance into prose literature until, in 1566, sixty translated novelettes were published under the title of *The Palace of Pleasure* by WILLIAM PAINTER (1540?–1594), clerk of the ordnance in the Tower of London. Subsequent continuations brought the number up to one hundred and one. In one portion of his work Painter may be regarded as a sort of prose Gower, about thirty of his stories being taken from the classics. The larger and more important portion, however, come from modern Italian or French writers, especially from Bandello, who contributes no fewer than twenty-six. Boccaccio and Queen Margaret of Navarre are also liberally represented. The work became a great storehouse of plots for dramatists, and in this point of view exerted much influence, but it did not encourage Englishmen to the composition of original fiction on the scale of the Italian short story. The numerous imitations to which its success gave rise, by Sir GEOFFREY FENTON (1567), GEORGE PETTIE (1576), GEORGE TURBERVILLE (1587), and GEORGE WHETSTONE (1582), are all made up of translations. Turberville and Whetstone will claim notice among poets and dramatists respectively, and Pettie's *Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure* is noteworthy as an anticipation of the euphuistic style of Lyly. Painter produced nothing original. Before obtaining his appointment at the Ordnance he had been a clergyman and a schoolmaster. He grew rich in office, and did not escape charges of malversation, but retained his post.

Not many writers of the period, till nearly the end of the sixteenth century, exercised a greater influence over cultivated literary taste than JOHN LYLY, "the Euphuist," one of the first examples of an English author attracting attention simultaneously in fiction, poetry, and drama. He was born, probably in 1554, either at Maidstone or at Boxley in Kent; studied at Oxford, where he obtained more reputation as a wit than as a scholar, and about 1575 came to Court in search of a place. The first part of his *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, appeared in 1579, and at once made him celebrated. *Euphues and his England* was published in 1580. Soon afterwards he began to write for the children trained as choristers in the Savoy Chapel and St. Paul's Cathedral that series of plays for which he is at the present day chiefly indebted for his literary distinction and celebrity, though not for his significance in the history of culture. This is entirely grounded upon his "euphuism," which tinged the style of many writers of the day, and is ridiculed by, or perhaps we should rather say good-naturedly quizzed by, Shakespeare in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Winter's Tale*. It is probably best known to the modern reader by the exaggerated parody of Sir Walter Scott in *The Monastery*. In fact, no age will ever be free from euphuism, which may be defined as the endeavour to gain attention for ordinary matter by extraordinary manner. This perfectly succeeded with Lyly, who, though a forcible writer on occasion, would never have impressed the age

as he did if his style had been unambitious. Neither, it may be said, would Carlyle; but Carlyle's style was natural to him, and suited the complexion of his thought; Lyly affected one which, except for the immediate reputation which it gained him, he had better have been without. It has been ascribed to the influence of the Spaniard Guevara, as translated by Sir Thomas North, and there is sufficient internal evidence of Lyly's careful study of Guevara's



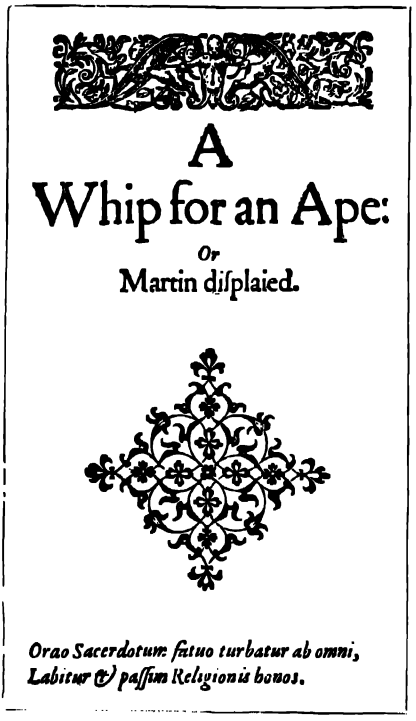
Facsimile letter from John Lyly to Lord Burghley

British Museum Lansdowne MS. 36

Dial of Princes, but it has in fact had precedents in all ages of literature, especially the effete ages, and in the Elizabethan age is mainly remarkable for having been the harbinger of strength instead of the token of decay. This may be explained in some measure by the fact that *Euphues* was to a great extent written for the Court, and that, in comparison with the nation, the Court of Elizabeth, brilliant as it was, was but a coterie, with no such influence as the Court of Louis XIV. afterwards exerted over France. Plain men went on writing and talking as of old, profiting perhaps by that increased attention to the structure of the period which was Lyly's one important service to English prose literature.

Lyly has been unfortunate with posterity, his excellent plays and charming

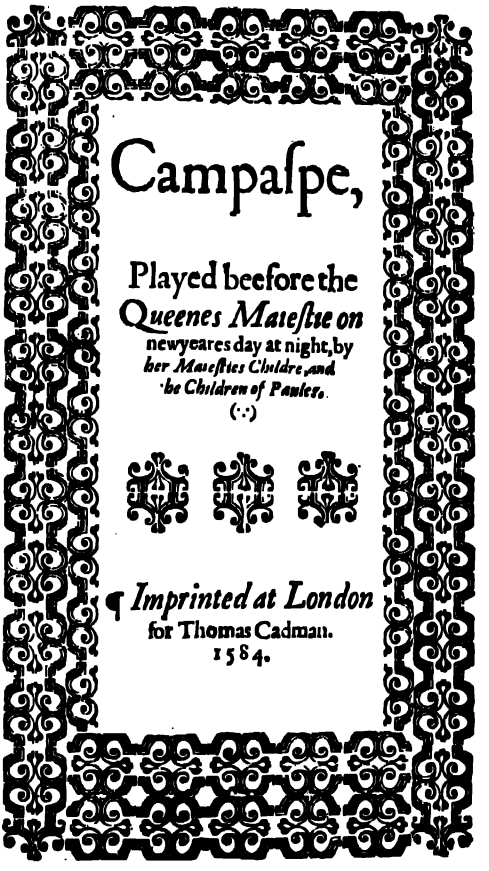
lyrics have until lately been undeservedly neglected, and the best-remembered portion of his work has gained him a bad name. Euphuism will always connote bad taste and affectation; and indeed it cannot be denied that Lyly would have conducted English prose upon a road which must have ended in the emulation of the worst extravagances of the worst foreign writers of the succeeding century. Happily, however, his example, so far as it was evil, soon ceased to be influential, while from another point of view he laid our language under obligations which have as yet been imperfectly recognised. Though with no pretensions to the eloquence and impressiveness of some of his predecessors, and (singular in one whose lyrics are so often models of graceful simplicity) going out of his way to avoid the artless elegance of others, he is yet one of the first conscious artists in English prose. Like the objects of his imitation, Guevara and Pettie, he, as remarked by Mr. Warwick Bond, conceives of the sentence as "a piece of literary architecture, whose end is foreseen in the beginning, and whose parts are calculated to minister to the total effect." This was a very important step forward. After all, the repellent feature of "euphuism" is not so much absolute bad taste as the continual effort to refine upon ordinary expression. The saying is not amiss in itself, but the constant succession of sparkling trifles becomes fatiguing. *Turpe est difficiles habere nugas.* The following extract from a letter of Philautus to his false friend is a fair specimen of Lyly's style:


A
Whip for an Ape:
Or
Martin diſplaied.
Oraо Sacerdotum fatuo turbatur ab omni,
Labitur & paſſim Religionis bonos.

Title-page of Lyly's "Whip for an Ape"

> Could'st thou, Euphues, for the love of a fruitless pleasure, violate the league of faithful friendship? Did'st thou weigh more the enticing looks of a lewd wench than the entire love of a loyal friend? If thou didst determine with thyself at the first to be false, why didst thou swear to be true? If to be true, why art thou false? If thou wast minded both falsely and forgedly to deceive me, why didst thou flutter and dissemble with me at the first? If to love me, why dost thou flinch at the last? If the sacred bands of amity did delight thee, why didst thou break them? if dislike thee, why didst thou praise them? Dost thou not know that a perfect friend should be like the glow-worm, which shineth most bright in the dark? or like the pure frankincense which smelleth more sweet when it is in the fire? or at the least not unlike the damask rose which is sweeter in the still than on the stalk? But thou, Euphues, dost rather resemble the swallow which in the summer creepeth under the eaves of every house, and in the winter leaveth nothing but dirt behind, or the bumble-bee which having sucked honey out of the fair flower, doth leave it and loath it, or the spider which in the finest web doth hang the fairest fly.

Lyly's admonitions on the conduct of life are in general very sound, and his advice to youth supplied much material to Polonius. He was evidently a very well-read man, and would seem to have occupied a good social position, having been four times elected to Parliament. If, however, his constant and fruitless importunity for a place at Court is to be excused, it can only be on the ground of narrow circumstances. This might well be the case after the abolition of the St. Paul's performances in 1590. After this date, save for his elections to Parliament and his petitions, but little is heard of him. He is identified with the "John Lyllie" who was buried in St. Bartholomew the Less on Nov. 30, 1606. His plays and lyrics will be noticed in another place. As an educationist his position is not unimportant. His positive precepts, in conscious or unconscious obedience to the precept of Sir Thomas Elyot, are mostly translated from Plutarch, but the spirit of his writing throughout is liberal and vivifying. The idea of introducing "the University of Athens" is borrowed from Guevara, but Lyly is evidently thinking of Oxford. Like Ascham, he conceived of education as a process extending throughout the whole of life, and not terminating with a young man's emancipation from college. The main defect of *Euphues*, considered as an educational manifesto, is that the situations are few and feebly handled, so that there is no adequate display of principle in action. It will be seen that the peculiarity of *Euphues* consists less in phraseology than in style; and that the chief tricks of style are the false glitter of constant antithesis, and the superabundance of eccentric metaphor. These certainly make some amends for the general flatness of the book considered as a story, and for the didactic character of the appendages which eke it out after the story is over, *Euphues and his Ephœbus*, *Euphues and Atheos*, *Euphues and his England*. The modern reader may in addition find entertainment, not designed as such by the author, in the latter's endless illustrations from natural history, mostly of a character to make a modern naturalist's hair


Campaſpe,

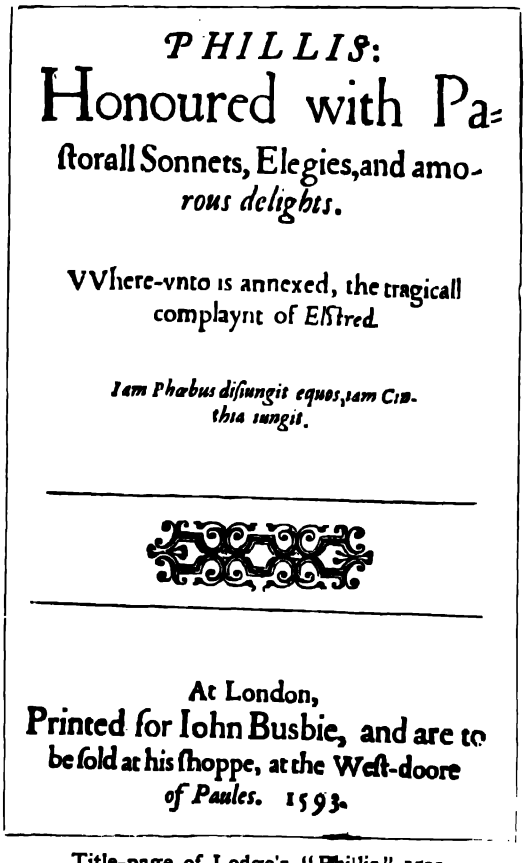
Played beefore the Queenes Maieſtie on newyeares day at night, by her Maieſties Childre, and the Children of Paules.

¶ Imprinted at London for Thomas Cadman. 1584.

Title-page of Lyly's "Campaspe" 1584

stand on end. He will find himself, for example, competent to prescribe for a sow, a tortoise, a bear, and a hart:

> The filthy sow when she is sick eateth the sea-crab and is immediately recovered: the tortoise having tasted the viper sucketh origanum and is quickly revived: the bear, ready to pine, licketh up the ants, and is recovered: the hart, being pierced with the dart, runneth out of hand to the herb dictanum, and is healed. And can men by no herb, by no art, by no way, procure a remedy for the impatient disease of love? Ah! well, I perceive that Love is not unlike the fig-tree, whose fruit is sweet, whose root is more bitter than the claw of a bittern.


PHILLIS:
Honoured with Pa-
ſtorall Sonnets, Elegies, and amo-
rous delights.

VVhere-vnto is annexed, the tragicall complaynt of Elstred.

Iam Phœbus diſiungit eques, iam Cin-
thia iungit.

At London,
Printed for Iohn Busbie, and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe, at the Weſt-doore of Paules. 1593.

Title-page of Lodge's "Phillis" 1593

It is somewhat difficult to determine where to place THOMAS LODGE (1558–1625), but since, although his gifts are best displayed in his lyrics, his best known work is the romance of *Rosalynde*, from which Shakespeare borrowed the plot of *As You Like It*, he may perhaps be best introduced here, reserving his poems for another place. He was a son of Sir Thomas Lodge, Lord Mayor in 1562, and Governor of the Russia Company, went to Oxford, adopted the profession of the law and renounced it for literature, incurring thereby the parental displeasure and apparently disinheritance also. He joined the literary set of Peele and Greene, made unsuccessful attempts as a dramatist, sometimes in confederacy with the latter, and wrote pamphlets against two classes of mankind held in especial abhorrence by unsuccessful men of letters, critics and usurers. At length he found his true vocation; and his volumes of verse, *Scilla's Metamorphosis* (1589) and *Phillis* (1593), with his romance of *Rosalynde* (1590), with many beautiful lyrics scattered through other works of less account, entitle him to a highly respectable place among the minor Elizabethans. His life meanwhile had been adventurous, for some time he was a soldier; about 1588 he made a voyage to the Canaries and Azores; and in 1591 accompanied Cavendish's expedition to Brazil. Towards 1600 a change came over him, he became a Roman Catholic, and

adopted the medical profession, having obtained, it is said, a degree from Avignon. At one time he was obliged to quit the country, and he appears to have been always more or less pressed by pecuniary difficulties, but he seems to have maintained a respectable position and to have enjoyed a fair amount of practice, even though his patients, among whom are named several persons of rank, left him time to translate Josephus and Seneca. He died in 1625.

Lodge is an excellent minor poet, whose lyrics will be noticed in another place. As a prose writer his reputation rests chiefly upon his *Rosalynde*, which derives directly from the *Euphues* of Lyly, but is greatly superior in plot, and, though artificial, less ambitious in diction. The merit of the invention is sufficiently attested by the approbation of Shakespeare, who has borrowed nearly the whole of it for the plot of *As You Like It*. The following description of the wrestling match, upon which the action hinges, is a favourable specimen of the style:

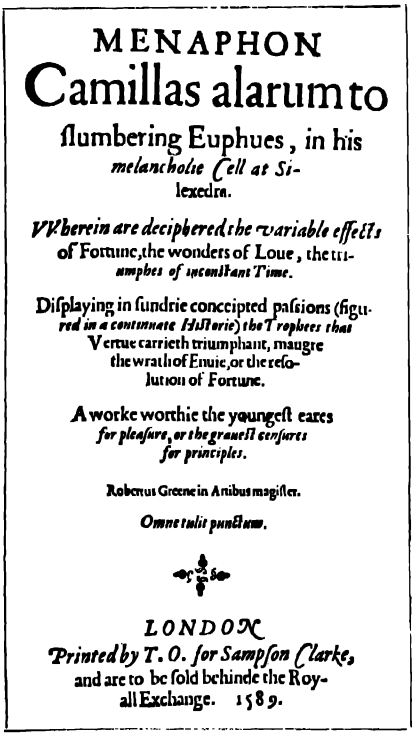


Illustration from the pamphlet "Greene in Conceipte" 1598

> The Norman seeing this young gentleman fettered in the looks of the ladies drove him out of his memento with a shake by the shoulder: Rosaden looking back with an angry frown, as if he had been wakened from some pleasant dream, discovered to all by the fury of his countenance that he was a man of some high thoughts: but when they all noted his youth, and the sweetness of his visage, with a general applause of favour they grieved that so goodly a young man should venture with so base an action; but seeing it were to his dishonour to hinder him from his enterprise, they wished him to be graced with the palm of victory. After Rosaden was thus called out of his memento by the Norman, he roughly clapped him with so fierce an encounter that they both fell to the ground, and with the violence of the fall were forced to breathe: in which space the Norman called to mind by all tokens that this was he whom Saladin had appointed him to kill; which conjecture made him stretch every limb, and try every sinew, that by working his death he might recover the gold which so bountifully was promised him. On the contrary part Rosaden while he breathed was not idle, but still cast his eyes upon Rosalind, who to encourage him with a favour lent him such an amorous look as might have made the most coward desperate: which glance of Rosalind so fired the passionate desires of Rosaden, that turning to the Norman he ran upon him and braved him with a strong encounter: the Norman received him as valiantly, that there was a sore combat, hard to judge on whose side fortune would be prodigal. At last Rosaden calling to mind the beauty of his new mistress, the fame of his father's honour, and the disgrace that should fall to his house by his misfortune, roused himself and threw the Norman against the ground, falling upon his chest with

so willing a weight, that the Norman yielded Nature her due and Rosaden the victory.

The place of Lodge's associate, ROBERT GREENE (1560?–1592) is also ambiguous, and he will claim special notice among dramatists; but, upon the whole, it may be most convenient to take his biography in connection with Lodge's. Born at Norwich and educated at Cambridge, he travelled on the Continent, and upon his return about 1580 betook himself to literature, leading a very irregular life. "No place," he says, "would please me to abide in, nor no vocation cause me to stay myself in." The testimony of his friends seems to afford reasonable ground for believing his bitter self-reproaches, and the accusations of his malignant enemy, Gabriel Harvey, to be grossly exaggerated; but there is no doubt that he deserted his wife and child, and that his six remaining years were spent in London as a man about town. Whatever his frailties, however, his literary industry was extraordinary, and his numerous pamphlets have in general a moral aim, although from the nature of the subjects they cannot always be edifying, the most important being directed to the exposure of the various descriptions of rascality from which the author had suffered, but which there is no ground to accuse him of having practised. He died in September 1592, indebted for burial, as he had long been indebted for food and lodging, to the charity of a poor shoemaker and his wife.


MENAPHON
Camillas alarum to
ſlumbering Euphues, in his
melancholie Cell at Si-
lexedra.

VVherein are deciphered the variable effects
of Fortune, the wonders of Loue, the tri-
umphes of inconſtant Time.

Diſplaying in ſundrie conceipted paſsions (figu-
red in a continuate Hiſtorie) the Trophees that
Vertue carrieth triumphant, maugre
the wrath of Enuie, or the reſo-
lution of Fortune.

A worke worthie the youngeſt eares
for pleaſure, or the graueſt cenſures
for principles.

Robertus Greene in Artibus magiſter.

Omne tulit punctum.

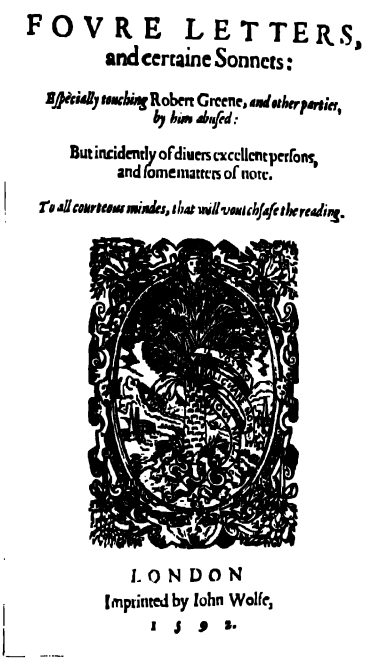
LONDON
Printed by T. O. for Sampſon Clarke,
and are to be ſold behinde the Roy-
all Exchange. 1589.

Title-page of Greene's "Menaphon" 1589

Greene's poetical and dramatic works will be noticed elsewhere. His other writings consist chiefly of romances and pamphlets. The most important of the former are *Menaphon*, also entitled *Greene's Arcadia*, *Perimedes the Blacksmith*, and *Pandosto*, otherwise known as *Dorastus and Fawnia*, remarkable as the source of the plot of *The Winter's Tale*. It was extremely popular, continuing to be reprinted until 1735, and, an unusual phenomenon in the case of an early English book, had two French translations. At the present day these fictions are chiefly interesting as evincing the general atmosphere of romantic sentiment which so greatly influenced the works of the dramatists. Greene made no attempt to depict the manners of his time in his novels, but partly supplied the defect by his pamphlets, which in some measure reflect the tastes and humours of the public. Some are short tales

or fanciful dialogues, others expose the cheats and vices of the town, or take up the author's literary quarrels. The most remarkable is the *Groat's Worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, celebrated for its attack upon Shakespeare as an "upstart crow," an invaluable testimony to the popularity of Shakespeare's early plays, and good evidence that he could not have been long before the public in 1592.

Before passing to the more realistic performance of Thomas Nash, some writers may be named who belonged more distinctly to the circle of Lodge and Greene, and whose stories, now barely readable except for curiosity's sake, enjoyed wide popularity in their own day. The most remarkable, perhaps, is BARNABE RICH (1540?–1620?), a soldier and voluminous writer on military and Irish matters. His principal novel, *Don Simonides*, is much in the style of Lyly; the plot of *Twelfth Night* is partly derived from one of his translated stories, *Apollonius and Silla*. The *Parismus* of EMANUEL FORD (1598) imitated the Spanish romances of chivalry, and, as well as the same author's *Montelion*, attained extraordinary popularity. ANTHONY MUNDAY, to be mentioned hereafter as a dramatist, translated many romances of the same type. The popularity of Greene was evinced by John Dickenson recalling him from the shades to father Dickenson's own pastoral romance of *Valeria* (1598). These fictions fatigue, not so much by their length, which is not in general excessive, as by their childishness and untruth to nature, yet there is in general a poetic touch about them which redeems them from contempt.


FOVRE LETTERS,
and certaine Sonnets:

Especially touching Robert Greene, *and other parties, by him abused:*

But incidently of diuers excellent perſons, and ſome matters of note.

To all courteous mindes, that will vouchſafe the reading.

LONDON
Imprinted by Iohn Wolfe,
1592.

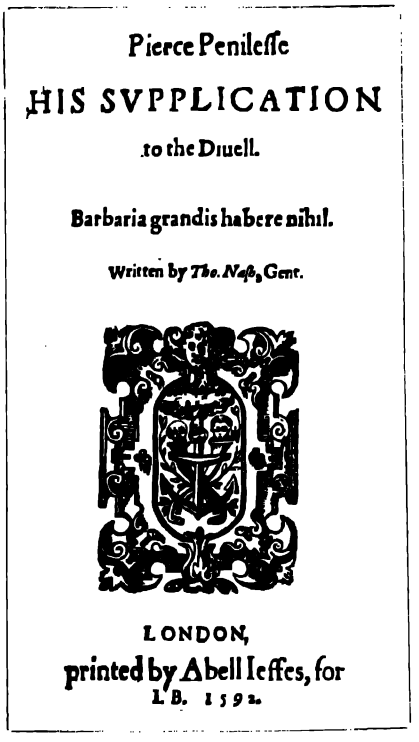
Title-page of Nash's "Four Letters," 1592

The history of THOMAS NASH (1567–1601), the son of a curate at Lowestoft, bears a strong resemblance to that of Greene. Like Greene, he was a sizar of St. John's College, Cambridge, and came to town to seek fortune by the exercise of his wit and parts. Like Greene he was prolific in satirical pamphlets, rather, however, literary lampoons than exposures of the follies and vices of the age, which latter, indeed, some of his own writings, which fortunately for his reputation have remained in manuscript, were but too well calculated to promote. Detesting Puritanism, probably out of reaction against his father's strictness, he took the anti-Puritan side in the Marprelate controversy, and is credited with a considerable share in bringing it to an end. His literary pamphlets, witty and scurrilous, made him hosts

Thomas Nash

of enemies, but he had also many friends. He vindicated the deceased Greene against the attacks of Gabriel Harvey; he completed and published Marlowe's unfinished tragedy of *Dido;* and he is praised by Lodge, Middleton, and Dekker. In 1597 a satirical comedy, *The Isle of Dogs*, procured him some months imprisonment, and he seems to have been in needy circumstances for the short remainder of his life. He died some time in 1601, leaving the character of "a man who had never paid shoemaker or tailor."

Nash, like Greene, is a playwright and a poet, and opportunity will be found for speaking of him in both capacities. He is much less truly a poet than Greene, whom, on the other hand, he surpasses in vigour, and his outlook over life is considerably wider. A quarrelsome temper drove him into the Marprelate controversy, and he carried on a most embittered dispute with Gabriel Harvey for years, until the Archbishop of Canterbury imposed silence upon both. His irritable mood was further exasperated by poverty and the sense of wrong operating upon an abnormal self-esteem. In the most remarkable of his tracts, *Pierce Pennilesse's Supplication to the Devil* (1592), a general outbreak against all the classes which had provoked his envy or jealousy, he says of himself:


Pierce Penileſſe

HIS SVPPLICATION

to the Diuell.

Barbaria grandis habere nihil.

Written by Tho. Nafh, Gent.

LONDON,
printed by Abell Ieffes, for
I. B. 1592.

Title-page of "Pierce Penilesse," 1592

> Having spent many years in studying how to live, and lived a long time without money; having tired my youth with folly, and surfeited my mind with vanity, I began at length to look back to repentance, and address my endeavours to prosperity. But all in vain; I sat up late and rose early, contended with the cold and conversed with scarcity; for all my labours turned to loss, my vulgar muse was despised and neglected, my pains not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I myself in prime of my best wit laid open to poverty.

Nash is a valuable writer for his illustrations of the manners of his time, and few of his pages are without strokes of quaint sarcastic humour. His only production of literary importance, however, is his romance, *The Unfortunate Traveller; or, the Life of Jack Wilton* (1593), and this not so much from any special merit as from being a remarkable forerunner of the picaresque English novel of the eighteenth century, and of the historical novel also, the action being laid on the Continent in the time of the Field of Cloth of Gold. The personages are uninteresting, but the incidents suffice to keep the reader's attention alive, and many scenes and descriptions are evidently taken from the writer's personal experience. The following lively picture of

disputants before the Duke of Saxony at Wittenberg was probably drawn nearer home:

> One pecked like a crane with his fore-finger at every half-syllable he brought forth, and nodded with his nose like an old singing man teaching a young chorister to keep time. Another would be sure to wipe his mouth with his handkercher at the end of every full point. And even when he thought he had cast a figure so curiously as he dived over head and ears into his auditor's admiration, he would take occasion to stroke up his hair, and trim up his mustachios twice or thrice over while they might have leisure to applaud him. A third wavered and waggled his head like a proud horse playing with his bridle, or as I have seen some fantastical swimmer at every stroke train his chin sidelong over his left shoulder. A fourth sweat and foamed at the mouth for very anger, his adversary had denied that part of his syllogism which he was not prepared to answer. A fifth spread his arms like an usher that goes before to make room, and thript with his finger and thumb when he thought he had tickled it with a conclusion. A sixth hung down his countenance like a sheep, and stuttered and slavered very pitifully when his invention was stepped aside out of the way. A seventh gasped and gaped for wind, and groaned in his pronunciation as if he were hard bound in some bad argument. Gross plodders were they all, that had some learning and reading, but no wit to make use of it. They imagined the Duke took the greatest pleasure and contentment to hear them speak Latin, and as long as they talked nothing but Tully he was bound to attend to them. A most vain thing it is in many universities at this day that they count him excellent eloquent who stealeth not whole phrases but whole pages out of Tully. If of a number of shreds of his sentences he can shape an oration, from all the world he carries it away, though in truth it be no more than a fool's coat of many colours.

It might well be expected that, considering the general spirit of curiosity abroad in the Elizabethan era, the growing opulence and refinement of the language, and the copious stores of valuable matter existing in other literature, the period would be distinguished by great achievements in translation. Such was, indeed, the case as regarded prose literature. The translators of poems in general wanted genius and an appreciation of metrical form; some of the prose translators were among the most cultivated and scholarly men of their nation; deeply penetrated with a sense of the excellence of their originals, and restrained by the imitation of them from the quaintness and extravagance which so frequently mar the best compositions of their own age.

Translation of the Scriptures

By far the most important and successful undertaking of the time in the regions of translation was the gradual elaboration of the Authorised Version of the Scriptures. Wycliffe and his followers had, as we have seen, bequeathed a noble rendering, but, apart from the changes rendered necessary by the process of time, it was needful to transform a version framed after the Latin Vulgate into a faithful representative of the original Greek and Hebrew. England was at first far behind other countries in this respect, no translation of any part of the Scriptures appearing the half-century following the introduction of printing, and the first that did appear being executed abroad. The imputation of heresy which attached to Wycliffe would naturally prevent the reprinting of his version, and the omission of the rulers of the Church to provide a substitute is sufficient proof of their resolution to keep the book from the people as long as they could. The spell was broken by a reformer, WILLIAM

TYNDALE, a man of heroic mould. With the aid of a Franciscan friar, and another anonymous helper, he succeeded in printing a portion of his own translation of the *New Testament* at Cologne in 1526, and the whole at Worms in the same or the following year. In 1530 he printed a translation of the Pentateuch at Marburg. Here he was on unsure ground, his knowledge of Hebrew cannot have been extensive, and he relied much on the old Wycliffite translation. He is said to have been assisted by Miles Coverdale, who had already been at work upon a complete translation, instigated and supported by Thomas Cromwell. This came forth in October 1535, exactly a year before the martyrdom of Tyndale, who had issued two more editions of his Testament, and his translations were subsequently incorporated in the so-called *Matthew Bible* (1537). Coverdale was not competent to translate directly from the Greek and Hebrew, and his version was made from that of Pagninus with corrections derived from the Wycliffe Bible and Luther's and other German versions. Though published at Antwerp, it was probably printed at Zurich. Times had changed greatly in England since Tyndale's *New Testament* had been prohibited; Coverdale's Bible found a ready admission into the country, and the *Matthew Bible* of 1537 appeared with the royal licence. So long ago as 1530 Henry had appointed a Commission of Inquiry, which had reported in favour of making a translation, but against publishing it. At the instance of Convocation, the question was taken up again, and Cranmer, as his office required, took the lead. He divided, his secretary Ralph Morrice tells us, an old version of the New Testament, which must have been Wycliffe's, for Tyndale's was new, into nine or ten parts, which he distributed among bishops and other men of learning, requiring them to return these corrected by a certain day. The same course was, no doubt, taken with the Old Testament, though no record remains. The Bible thus prepared, happily based on Wycliffe's, but no less happily corrected by reference to the original texts or faithful renderings of these, was for some unknown reason directed to be printed at Paris; but when in December 1538 the French Government stopped the impression, at the solicitation of the Pope, the sheets already printed, with the types themselves, were smuggled over to England; the workmen followed, and the book quitted the press in April 1539. It had been largely executed at the expense of Cromwell, whose arms appeared on the title and upon those of the London editions of the following year, though they were defaced upon his fall and execution. This edition bears on the title-page the momentous words: "This is the Bible appointed to the use of the churches." Its Psalter remains unaltered in the Book of Common Prayer.

"The Great Bible," as Cranmer's Bible was fitly called, was frequently reprinted, usually in a smaller form, until the accession of Mary caused its prohibition. This temporary abeyance was, no doubt, thought a favourable opportunity to supersede it by an amended version. In 1558 Coverdale and three other scholars, William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson, met at Geneva, and the last three, probably directed by Coverdale, prepared the revised version known as the *Genevan Bible*. This was recom-

mended to the Puritan party by a marginal commentary, and to readers in general by the adoption of Roman type and by division into verses. It was published in April 1560, and coming in to fill the gap caused by the cessation of Bible printing in England since 1553, obtained a wide popularity. The bishops, to whom the Puritan views of the Genevan translators were in general unacceptable, brought out in 1568 a rival version, generally known as the *Bishops' Bible*, which nevertheless, in spite of its official character, did not obtain the popularity of the Genevan version. It must be borne in mind that the differences were not very material



Lancelot Andrews
From a scarce engraving done by W. Hollar in 1643

With the same wise conservatism and recognition of the principle of continuity that Cranmer had shown, Archbishop Parker had directed the revisers "to follow the common English translation used in the churches, and not to recede from it but where it varieth manifestly from the Hebrew or Greek original." Practically, therefore, England had but one Bible. The desirability of perfect uniformity, nevertheless, was evident, but the revision needed to effect it was judiciously delayed until the accession of James I. seemed to present an opportunity, unfortunately lost, for allaying contentions in the Church, and also allowed the extension of Biblical revision to Scotland. The proposal, originally made by Dr. Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and strongly supported by the King, was adopted at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Forty-six eminent scholars were appointed, divided into six committees, two meeting at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge; and suggestions from other quarters were not disdained. So much was biblical erudition then a monopoly of the clergy that only one layman appears among the translators, and he, Sir Henry Savile, a quasi-ecclesiastic as Warden of Merton and Provost of Eton. If any name deserves to be pre-eminently connected with this immortal work, it is that of LANCELOT ANDREWS, Bishop of Winchester, unequalled in his own communion as a devotional writer, and President of the first committee, entrusted with the entire translation between Genesis and Second Kings. Bishop Smith, of Gloucester, also deserves exceptional mention as the author of the Preface, a most significant document, as evincing the immense advantage which the English Bible derived from the

Lancelot Andrews



Title-page of the "Bishops' Bible," 1611

translators' obedience to the wise injunction, the first and most important of fourteen excellent rules, "The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the *Bishops' Bible*, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit." The virtue of the *Bishops' Bible* consists in the fact that the same regulation had been followed in its case, insomuch that the language of the Authorised Version is not wholly Elizabethan or Jacobean, but at bottom English of the fourteenth century, greatly enriched and adorned, it is true, by the gains of the Elizabethan and Jacobean times, but still coming before the people of its day as something venerable for its style as well as for its substance, and parted by a wide gulf from ordinary literature. Bishop Smith's Preface was justly reputed a fine composition in its time, but "the fashion of this world passeth away." Had the entire translation been executed in this manner, it would now be deemed admirable, but intolerable. We owe it to the wisdom of Tyndale, and Cranmer, and Parker, and King James, that the English Bible is like a mediæval cathedral, the work of successive generations. The same may probably be said of the German Bible, for Luther had many, though obscure, predecessors. Where it has been necessary, as it were, to extemporise a translation, the Bible has never taken the like hold upon the national conscience or the national literature.

The Authorised Version was given to the people in 1611, one year after the publication at Douai of the Roman Catholic version from the Vulgate, commenced by the publication of the New Testament at Rheims in 1582, "the only other English Bible," Mr. Blunt remarks, "which has ever lived beyond one edition."

Prose Translators

It would be impossible to give any account here of the numerous and excellent prose translators who in the reign of Elizabeth contributed so much to enrich the language and extend the knowledge and sympathies of their nation. Adlington's *Apulcius* and Underdown's *Heliodorus* are fine examples, though the latter, first published in 1569, was pronounced "almost obsoleted" by 1622. One great translator imperatively claims notice, not only from his having bestowed a classic upon English literature, but from his special connection with Shakespeare.

Sir Thomas North

Sir THOMAS NORTH (1535?–1601?) was a younger son of the first Baron North, and according to the Earl of Leicester, "a very honest gentleman, who hath many good things in him which are drowned only by poverty." The best things in him, however, appear to have been brought out of him by this agency, for his diligence as a translator was probably owing to his impecunious condition. In 1557 he translated Guevara's *Dial of Princes*, a briefer recension of which had already been rendered by Lord Berners. These versions have been thought to have exerted much influence upon the *Euphues* of John Lyly, as the original certainly did upon Gongora, the Lyly of Spain. North also made an excellent translation of the *Moral Philosophy* of the Italian Doni, a book much more picturesque than the title promises, being in fact a book of Eastern fables.

His fame rests, however, upon another book, the translation of *Plutarch's*

Lives, published in 1579. The version labours under what might at first sight seem an insurmountable disqualification; it is not made from Plutarch direct, but from the French translation of Amyot. But Amyot is one of the few translators in whose hands an author gains more than he loses. North, without injury to Amyot's naïve picturesqueness, envelops it in the glory of a grand style; and Plutarch, originally more commendable for his matter than his manner, becomes a model of fine Elizabethan diction. He was, indeed, a fit author for the Elizabethan epoch; "the Doctor," as Emerson calls him, "and historian of heroism."



Title-page of North's translation of "Plutarch's Lives," 1579

In comparison with the general spirit of his work, North's frequent misprisions of Amyot's meaning, to say nothing of Plutarch's, are of the smallest consequence: and it is deeply to be regretted that he should so long have been regarded as an antiquated writer. The other versions of Plutarch in our language are meritorious but not inspiring, and can exert little of the moral influence that streams abundantly from North. His revival in our day is mainly to be attributed to the discovery of Shakespeare's indebtedness to him. But for him the Roman plays might never have been written, and the comparison of his text with Shakespeare's is most entertaining. First his lives of Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, Coriolanus were reprinted as the most important in connection with the study of Shakespeare, and we have now progressed to a complete edition, which it may be hoped will never be allowed to remain out of print.

North's description of the slaying of Pyrrhus is a fair specimen of his nervous and animated style:

> Wherefore Pyrrhus seeing his people thus troubled and hurried to and fro, took off his crown from his head which he wore upon his helmet, that made him known of his men afar off, and gave it to one of his familiars that was next unto him: and trusting then to the goodness of his horse, flew upon his enemies that followed him. It fortuned that one hurt him with a pike, but the wound was neither dangerous nor great: wherefore Pyrrhus set upon him who had hurt him, who was an Argian boor, a man of mean condition and a poor old woman's son, whose mother at that present time was gotten up to the top of the tiles of a house, as all other women of the city were, to see the fight. And she perceiving that it was her son whom Pyrrhus came upon, was so affrighted to see him in that danger that she took a

tile, and with both her hands cast it upon Pyrrhus. The tile, falling from his head by reason of his headpiece, lighted full in the nap of his neck, and brake his neck bone asunder, wherewith he was suddenly so benumbed that he lost his sight with the blow, the reins of his bridle fell out of his hand, and himself fell from his horse to the ground, by Licymnius' tomb, before any man knew what he was, at least of the common people. Until at the last there came one Zopyrus that was at pay with Antigonus, and two or three other soldiers also that ran straight to the place, and knowing him, dragged his body into a gate, even as he was coming again to himself out of this trance. This Zopyrus drew out a Slavon sword he wore by his side, to strike off his head. But Pyrrhus cast such a grim countenance on him between his eyes that made him so afraid, and his hand so to strike therewith, that being thus amazed he did not strike him right in the place where he should have cut off his head, but killed him right in the mouth about his chin, so that he was a great while ere he could strike off his head.

The mention of a *Slavon* sword, the Slavonians being unheard of in history until eight centuries after Pyrrhus, is an instance of North's dependence upon Amyot. Plutarch says, "an *Illyrian* sword," which Amyot, dutifully followed by North, renders *Esclavon*.

The following is a good example of North's rendering of Plutarch's more reflective vein :

Aemilius had four sons, two of the which he gave in adoption unto the families of Scipio and of Fabius, and two other which he had by his second wife he brought up with him in his own house, and were both yet very young. Of the which the one died, being fourteen years of age, five days before his father's triumph : and the other died also three days after the pomp of triumph, at twelve years of age. When this sorrowful chance had befallen him, every one in Rome did pity him in their hearts : but fortune's spite and cruelty did more grieve and fear them, to see her little regard towards him, to put into a house of triumph, full of honour and glory and of sacrifices and joy such a pitiful mourning, and mingling of sorrows and lamentations of death, amongst such songs of triumph and victory. Notwithstanding this, Aemilius taking things like a wise man, thought that he was not only to use constancy and magnanimity against the sword and pike of the enemy : but alike also against all adversity and enmity of spiteful fortune. So he wisely weighed and considered his present misfortune with his former prosperity ; and finding his misfortune counterpoised with felicity, and his private griefs cut off with common joy, he gave no place to his sorrows and mischances, neither blemished any way the dignity of his triumph and victory. For when he had buried the eldest of his two last sons, he left not to make his triumphal entry, as you have heard before. And his second son also being deceased after his triumph, he caused the people to assemble, and in the face of the whole city he made an oration, not like a discomforted man, but like one rather that did comfort his sorrowful countrymen for his mischance.

Nothing can be more likely than that North's *Plutarch* was brought to Shakespeare's notice by the printer of the 1595 edition, Richard Field, a Stratford-on-Avon man of about Shakespeare's age, who had probably befriended him when he came to London. Shakespeare has paid Plutarch the compliment of following him as he follows Nature; he adheres closely to his narrative, appropriates his happy phrases and picturesque touches, but heightens and almost transforms these by the magic of his diction. Plutarch, for example, thus describes Cæsar's suspicion of Cassius :

Cæsar also had Cassius in great jealousy, and suspected him much : whereupon he said on a time to his friends, " What will Cassius do, think ye ? I like not his pale looks." Another time, when Cæsar's friends complained unto him of Antonius and

Dolabella that they pretended some mischief towards him: he answered them again, "As for those fat men and smooth-combed heads," quoth he, "I never reckon of them: but these pale-visaged and carrion lean people, I fear them most," meaning Brutus and Cassius.

Thus expanded by Shakespeare:

Cæsar. Let me have men about me that are fat:
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

Antony. Fear him not, Cæsar; he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Cæsar. Would he were fatter! But I fear him not;
Yet, if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So much as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men; he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything:
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be feared
Than what I fear—for always I am Cæsar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.



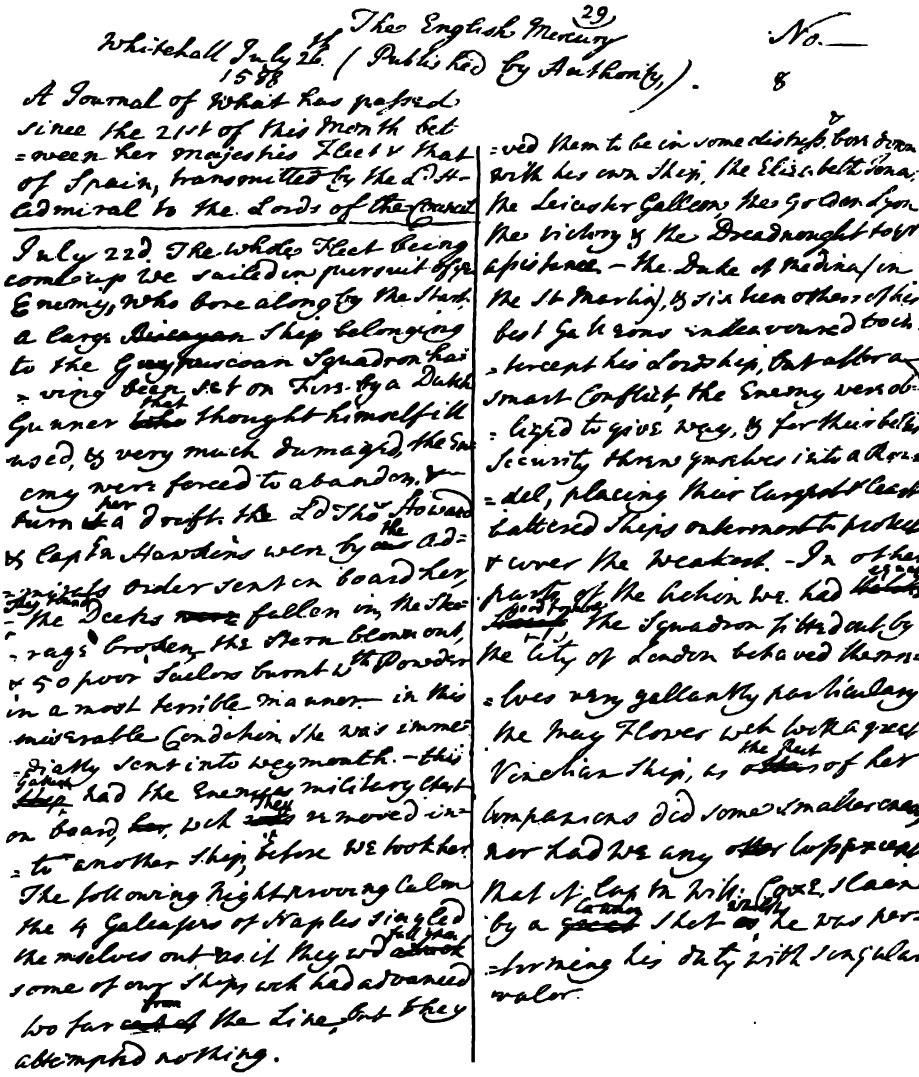
John Florio

From the portrait in the 1613 edition of "Montaigne"

One other translator deserves a word of notice, associated with North as he is by the fact that his translation also was used by Shakespeare. The Utopia depicted by Gonzago in *The Tempest* is undoubtedly derived from the admirable translation of Montaigne published in 1603 by JOHN FLORIO (1553?–1625), the son of a refugee Italian protestant minister. Florio must have been personally acquainted with Shakespeare, having been in the household of Southampton and patronised by Pembroke. He appears to have been intimate with many men of letters, and availed himself of his knowledge of Italian to translate Ramusio's collection of travels and a large collection of Italian proverbs, also to compile an Italian dictionary under the title of *A World of Words.* A copy of his Montaigne in the British Museum bears what

purports to be Shakespeare's autograph, but its authenticity is not generally admitted.

One important, though ephemeral, form of literature remains to be noticed —the newspaper. It is mentioned here, though with some anticipation of



Facsimile of a portion of the MS. of the spurious "English Mercurie"
British Museum, Birch MS. 4106

chronology, on account of the claim set up and long admitted for England as the nation which first gave newspapers to the world. "By the wisdom of Elizabeth and the prudence of Burleigh," it was affirmed, the *English Mercurie* had been established in 1588, to convey official intelligence respecting

the progress of the Spanish Armada. Who could doubt this when the paper was in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, open to the inspection of all the world? So it was, but nobody inspected it, and the statement was repeated unchallenged in a hundred places between 1794 and 1839, when Mr. Thomas Watts, afterwards Keeper of Printed Books at the Museum, had the curiosity to look at it, and "the successful imposition of fifty years was shattered to pieces in five minutes." Paper and print were of the eighteenth century, and two MS. copies of numbers, from the numerous corrections evidently the first drafts of the author, are eighteenth century also. It is almost certain that the fabricator was Philip Yorke, second Earl of Hardwicke, who had already essayed a more innocent mystification as the writer of *The Athenian Letters*. News-letters registering particular occurrences circulated widely both in manuscript and print in most European countries during the early part of the seventeenth century; but no periodical devoted to news appeared in England until, on May 23, 1622, Nathaniel Butter, Nicholas Bunne, and Thomas Archer issued the *Weekly News from Italy, Germany*, &c. Germany, however, had been beforehand with England, the *Frankfurter Journal* having been commenced in 1615.

THE

English Mercurie. N° 51.

Published by AUTHORITIE,

For the Prevention of false Reportes.

Whitehall, July 26th 1588.

A Journal of what has passed since the 21st *of this Month, betweene her Majestie's Fleete and that of* Spayne; *transmitted by the Lorde Highe Admirall to the Lordes of the Councill.*

JULY 22d. The whole Fleete being come up, wee sayled in Pursuite of the Enemie, who bore along by the *Starte*; a large Ship belonginge to the *Guypuscoan* Squadrone having beene set on Fire by a *Dutch* Gunner, that thought himself ill used, and very much damaged, the Enemie were forced to abandon and turne her a drift. The Lorde *Thomas Howard* and Capt. *Hawkins* were by the Admirall's order sente on board her; they founde the Decks fallen in, the Steerage broken, the Stern blowne out, and fifty poore Saylors burnte with Powder in a most terrible Manner. In this myserable Condition, she was immediately sente into *Weymouth*. This Galleon had the Enemie's militarie Cheste on board, which they removed into another Ship, before we tooke her. The following Nighte proving calme, the foure Galleasses of *Naples* singled themselves out, as if they woulde fall upon some of our Ships, which had advanced too farre from the Line, but they attempted noething.

July 23d. The *Spanish Armado*, which was now come over against *Portland*, tacked about, and stoode in towardes the Shoare, which we likewise did. After severall Attemptes to get the Winde of each other, a smart Engagement began: The *Triumph*, (commaunded by Rear-Admirall *Forbisher*), with the Rest of his Divisione, having fallen to Leeward were briskly attacqued by Don *Juan de Recalde*: They had warme Worke for an Houre and halfe, when the Lorde Admiral observed them to be in some Distresse, and bore downe with his owne Ship, the *Elizabeth Jonas*,

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A page of the spurious "English Mercurie"

CHAPTER III

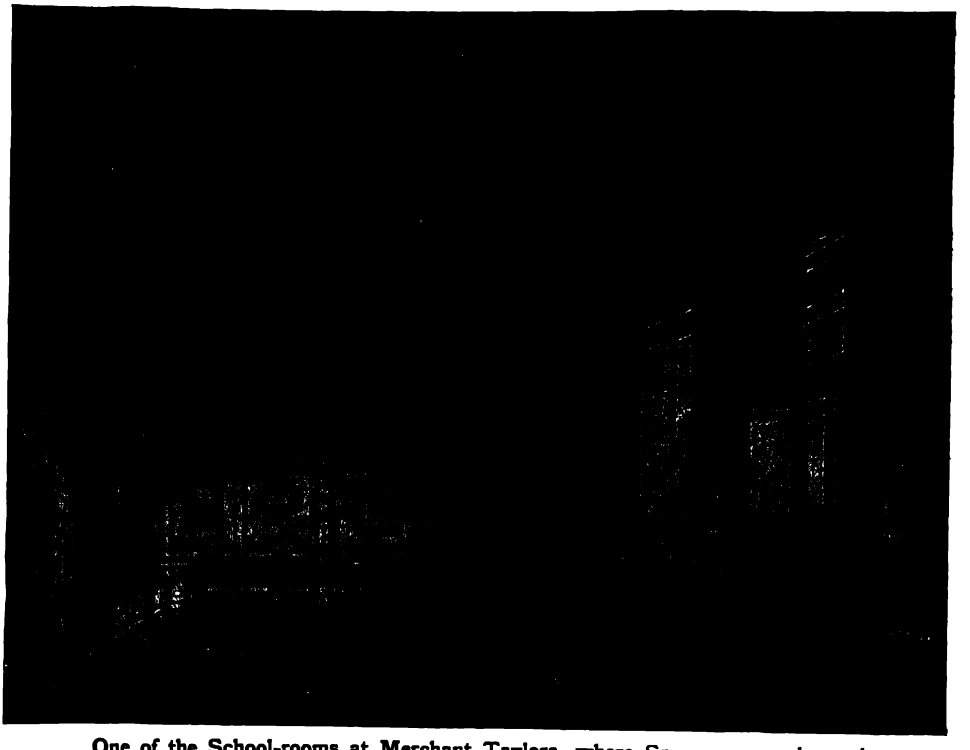
SPENSER AND MINOR ELIZABETHAN POETS

An ancient emblem, recalled to the recollection of the present time by the genius of Burne-Jones, expresses the inexorable revolution of the Wheel of Fortune. As originally conceived, three kings are represented revolving along with the fateful wheel. From the mouth of the one who is descending proceeds the legend, "I have been"; another, surmounting the summit of the circumference, proudly declares, "I am"; a third, ascending, yet more proudly announces, "I am to be." The representation might serve for an allegory of the condition in the middle of the sixteenth century of the three countries, Italy, Portugal, and England, each of which enriched the later Renaissance with a national epic poet. Tasso was driven to seek a theme in the past. The subject of his epic is not national, except in so far as he has contrived to connect it with the House of Ferrara, but he is only too faithful a representative of his country, still teeming with beauty, but deeply infected with that poison of the Counter Reformation which ultimately so nearly destroyed her intellectual life. We blush to be told that the *Jerusalem Delivered* was revised by ecclesiastics with the full assent of the author. Milton's licenser at one time would fain have silenced him, but never presumed to mend him. Camoens—though the symptoms of decay were already beginning to appear—celebrates his country at the height of her fame and glory. Spenser, like the third king in the emblem proclaiming what is not yet but is to be, sets forth the coming glories in a majestic but obscure allegory.

The three poets whom we have thus brought together do indeed wear a family likeness, only to be explained by the degree in which they are representatives of their age. Perhaps in no age have the characters of cavalier and poet been so perfectly united as in the sixteenth century. Poets continue to be usually men of breeding, but, as is inevitable from the great development of literature, the man of letters has encroached upon the courtier and the soldier. In the sixteenth century it is often difficult to decide which type is more prominent in the individual. In Tasso the scholar, in Spenser the courtier, in Camoens the soldier almost rival the poet; but all characters blend together to compose a singularly attractive personality. We shall have to speak further of Spenser's relation to the great contemporary poets of the Continent, and here only note the remarkable circumstance that, while Tasso and Camoens and Ariosto are famous all over Europe, Spenser, except to the English-speaking peoples, is almost unknown. This is no isolated phenomenon; with the exception of Shakespeare and Milton, our most exquisite singers are far less appreciated abroad than those whom we should place in the

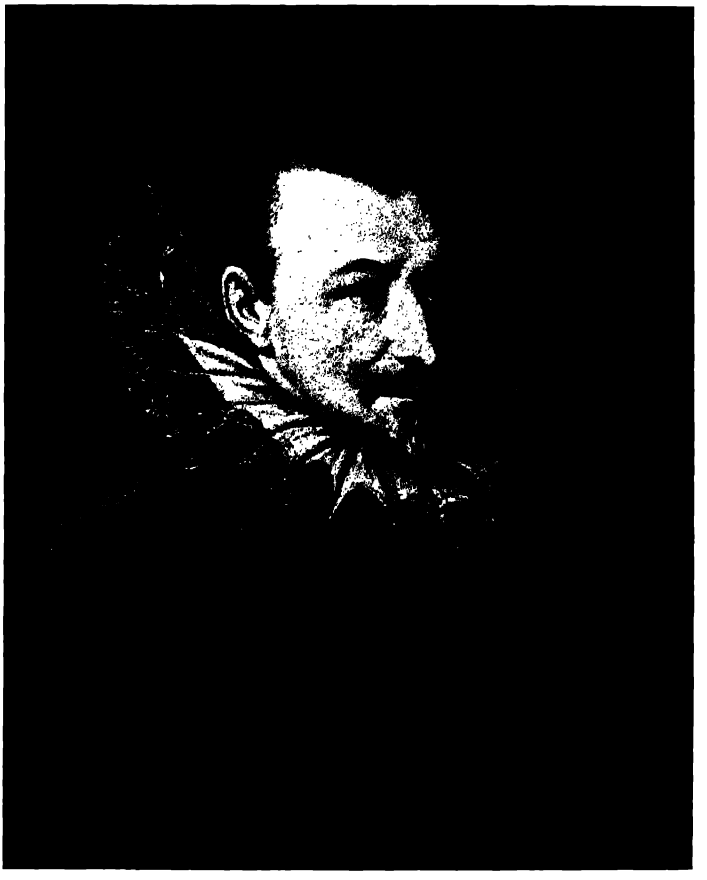
second rank. If our Wordsworths and Shelleys and Spensers should ever force themselves upon recalcitrant Europe as Shakespeare and Scott and Byron have done, we shall see another literary revolution and a second Romantic School.

Edmund Spenser, though born in East Smithfield, probably in 1552, was of Lancashire extraction, his father having migrated to London from the neighbourhood of Burnley. The family was well connected, but Spenser's father, like many another cadet of a good house, was compelled to resort to trade, and several years after the poet's birth is found exercising "the art and mystery of clothmaking" in the service of Nicholas Peele, whom, remembering Robert Peel, we must con-



One of the School-rooms at Merchant Taylors, where Spenser was educated

clude to have been a Lancashire man also. It was but natural that the younger Spenser, doubtless a youth of promise, should obtain admittance to Merchant Taylors' School, just founded, and the rather as the warden of the Company at the time was a namesake, and probably a relation. In due time Spenser went to Pembroke Hall, afterwards College, at Cambridge, and is mentioned among thirty-one scholars from London grammar schools admitted to the University in 1569. In the same year he anonymously translated poems from Du Bellay and Petrarch as letterpress for woodcuts introduced to enliven *A Theatre for Worldlings*, a moral tract translated from the Flemish. He must, therefore, have studied modern as well as classical languages, and his University career, though frequently interrupted by ill-health, was distinguished and profitable. He contracted many friendships, the most important being that with the sour and rancorous, but able and learned, Gabriel Harvey, the "Hobbinol" of *The*

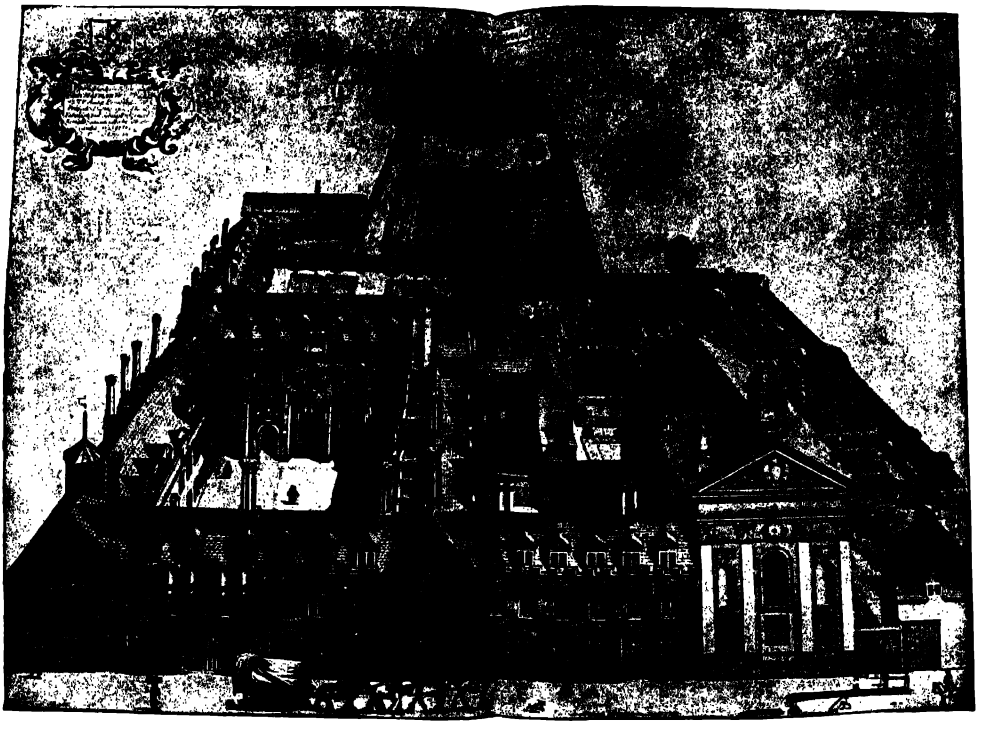


Edmund Spenser.

Shepherd's Calendar. After quitting Cambridge in 1576 he repaired for a while to the original abode of his family in the North, and conceived an unreturned passion for the nymph whom he celebrates as Rosalind, in which name, he tells us, the lady's actual appellation is concealed. She is usually thought to have been Rose Dyneley, the daughter of a yeoman near Clitheroe. She appears in his writings as late as *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1591). At length the disconsolate swain

Rose, and twitched his mantle blue;

forsaking his Lancashire witch for London. In 1577 or 1578 he became a member of the household of the Earl of Leicester, perhaps the best position he could have



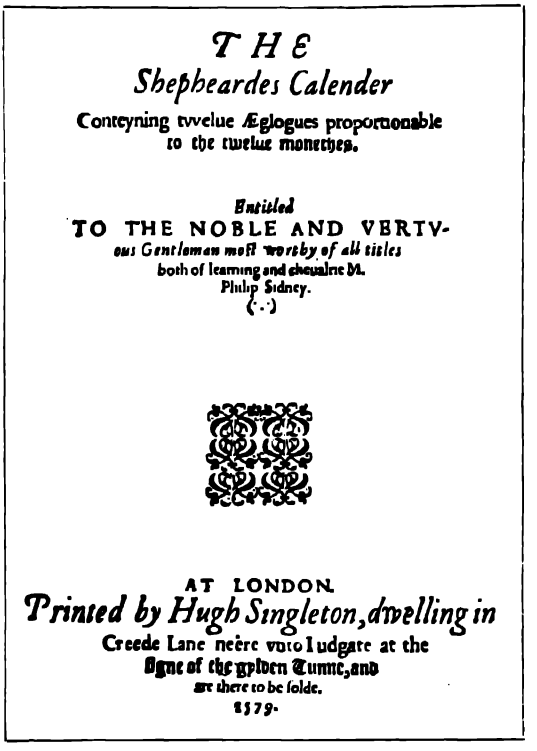
Pembroke College, Cambridge

From Loggan's "Cantabrigia Illustrata," 1688

found for the development of his genius by intercourse with kindred minds and initiation into the affairs of the world. Above all, he there formed a close friendship with Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew and especial favourite, with whom, in conjunction with Sir Edward Dyer and others, he formed a literary society entitled "The Areopagus." Nor did he intermit his former literary friendship with Gabriel Harvey, which, from Harvey's residence at the University, had to be maintained by correspondence. Portions of letters from both correspondents are preserved, and attest Spenser's remarkable literary activity at the period, though most of the works which seem to be indicated as actually written are either lost or have been incorporated with subsequent productions. It is remarkable that he should have written no fewer than nine comedies on the Italian model, not a line of which is preserved. It appears that *The Faerie Queene* was commenced by 1579.

Harvey continually besieged Spenser with importunities on his favourite crotchet of the employment in English of classical metres, regulated by quantity instead of accent, and actually beguiled one of the greatest masters of melody in our language not merely to experiment in this style, but to express a preference for it. The aberration was of short continuance.

Spenser's literary energy at this date was the more remarkable as his especial duty in Leicester's service would seem to have been the conveyance of secret despatches. From allusions in his works, he appears to have visited Ireland on this errand, and to have gone, or to have expected to go, as far as Rome. This expedition, if it took place, occurred between October 1579 and April 1580. *The Shepherd's Calendar* was published in the December of the former year, and was at once recognised as raising Spenser to the highest rank among contemporary


THE
Shepheardes Calender
Conteyning twelue Æglogues proportionable to the twelue monethes.
Entitled
TO THE NOBLE AND VERTVous Gentleman most worthy of all titles both of learning and chevalrie M. Philip Sidney.
AT LONDON
Printed by Hugh Singleton, dwelling in Creede Lane neere vnto Ludgate at the signe of the golden Tunne, and are there to be solde.
1579.

Title-page of Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar," 1579

The favour of Leicester and the friendship of Sidney probably contributed more than his poetical deserts to obtain Government reward for Spenser, but Government patronage took a form more suitable for a civil officer than a poet. Like many another promising youth, Spenser was quartered upon Ireland, and, as Secretary to the Lord Deputy, Lord Grey de Wilton, enlisted in the crusade which England, compelled by the absolute necessity of preventing Spain from obtaining a foothold in the country, was tardily undertaking against Irish barbarism. Even in the ages of faith, it may be doubted whether many champions of the Cross would have followed Godfrey without Syrian castles and vineyards in perspective, and although, as Dean Church eloquently points out, Elizabeth's servants in Ireland actually did feel as knights-errant contending for religion and loyalty against monsters, giants, and enchantments, it can be no reproach to them if they expected the State they served to provide for them. Spenser's opinion of the Irish of his day exactly corresponded with that of the Spanish officers who sought refuge among them after the shipwreck of the Armada; and the friendship and encouragement of Raleigh, and the more substantial consolations of the clerkship to the Court of Chancery in Dublin, the clerkship to the Council of Munster (which, however, he had to purchase), the estate of Kilcolman in Cork, subject to a Crown rent, and various leases of abbey-lands on advantageous terms, made insufficient amends for the uncongenial environment. At the prompting,

as he declares, of Raleigh, he returned to England in 1589, resolved to use all his influence for his return to his native land.

He arrived in London in November, bringing with him the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. These were published in the following year, and raised him at once to a position of unchallenged supremacy, not only among the poets of his day but among all English poets. The poem, an allegory of Queen Elizabeth, was naturally dedicated to her, " to live," it was grandly added, " with the eternity of her fame." Commendatory poems by Raleigh, Harvey, and others accompanied the text, and, after some delay, genius and interest in union prevailed to procure the author a pension, said to have been cut down by one-half through the economy of Burleigh, as much the father of all Treasury officials as Franklin, according to Carlyle, is " the father of all the Yankees." All the poet's efforts, however,



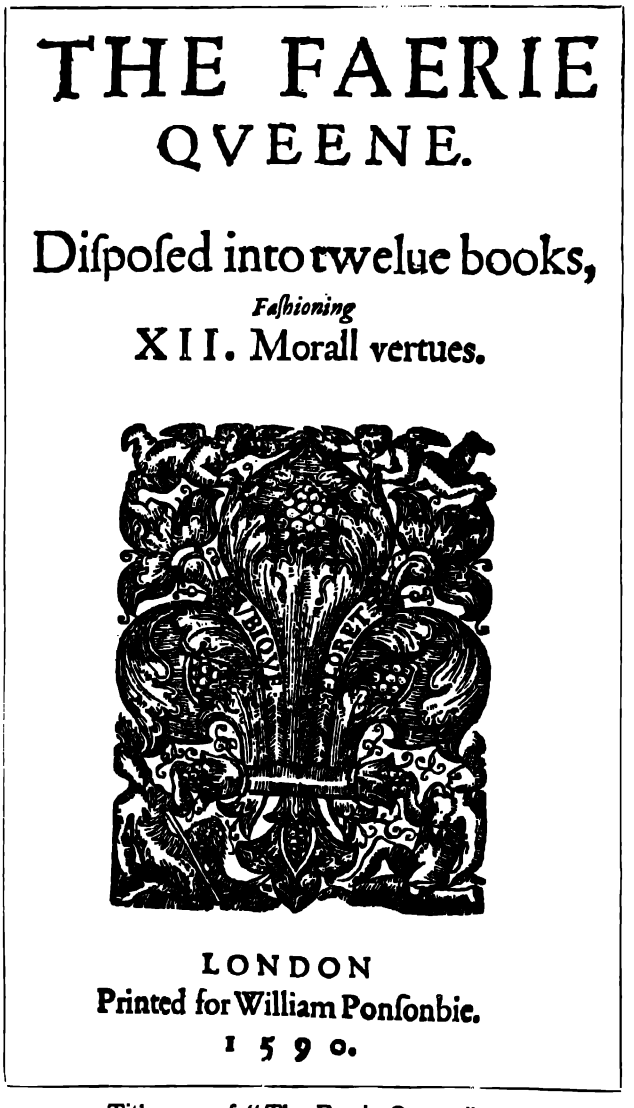
The Ruins of Kilcolman Castle

From a drawing by W. H. Bartlett

could not obtain his transference to England, and he returned in 1591 to his house at Kilcolman, where he produced, under the title of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, a record of his expedition, with portraits of his literary friends under assumed names. In 1591, also, a number of his early productions were published under the title of *Complaints*. The personal allusions discovered in some among them are said to have led to the temporary suppression of the book.

The Ireland of Elizabeth's time contributed much to steep Spenser's poem in the hues of crusading emprise, and so far helped him, but debarred him from literary intercourse and sympathy. It may have been a suitable abode for the man of letters who, like Raleigh, united the sword to the pen ; to the gentle and scholarly Spenser it must have been far otherwise. His residence, Kilcolman Castle, on the high road between Mallow and Limerick, was a small dark tower by the margin of a miniature lake, in our time overlooking a dreary waste, but in his surrounded by wood. Its solitude had at least the advantage of shielding the poet from interruption, and so compensating him for the time which he was compelled to devote to official duties ; he may also have been the more disposed to labour assiduously

upon the poem from which he expected deliverance. He further sought, and it is to be hoped found, solace in love-making, having become enamoured of a lady whose hand he obtained after a year's wooing, signalised by the composition of his *Amoretti*, a kind of sonnet-diary. The lady has not been identified with entire certainty, but is believed to have been Elizabeth Boyle, a member of the Earl of Cork's family. Little is known of her person and disposition, but inferences more favourable to her charms than her constancy may be derived from the fact that she found two husbands after Spenser's death. The marriage, which took place at Cork or Youghal on June 11, 1594, was celebrated in Spenser's *Epithalamion*, the noblest of his lyrics, and one of the highest flights of English poetry. In the same year he resigned his clerkship to the Council of Munster in favour of a relative of his wife, and perhaps in consequence of unsuccessful litigation with his troublesome neighbour, Lord Roche. At the end of 1595 he was again in London with three more books of *The Faerie Queene*, which were published early in the following year. They found no less acceptance than the former with the public at large, and gained him the applause of all men of letters. It may, indeed, be remarked that no illustrious author seems to have suffered less than Spenser from envy and detraction, a circumstance perhaps even more significant of the sweetness of his nature than of the merit of his verse. The caresses of high society were abundantly bestowed upon him. His next publication, the *Hymns*, was dedicated to two countesses. The Queen turned a deaf ear to the complaints of James VI. of Scotland, who, with more truth than dignity, accused Spenser of having depicted his mother in the character of the witch Duessa. Essex


THE FAERIE
QVEENE.

Diſpoſed into twelue books,

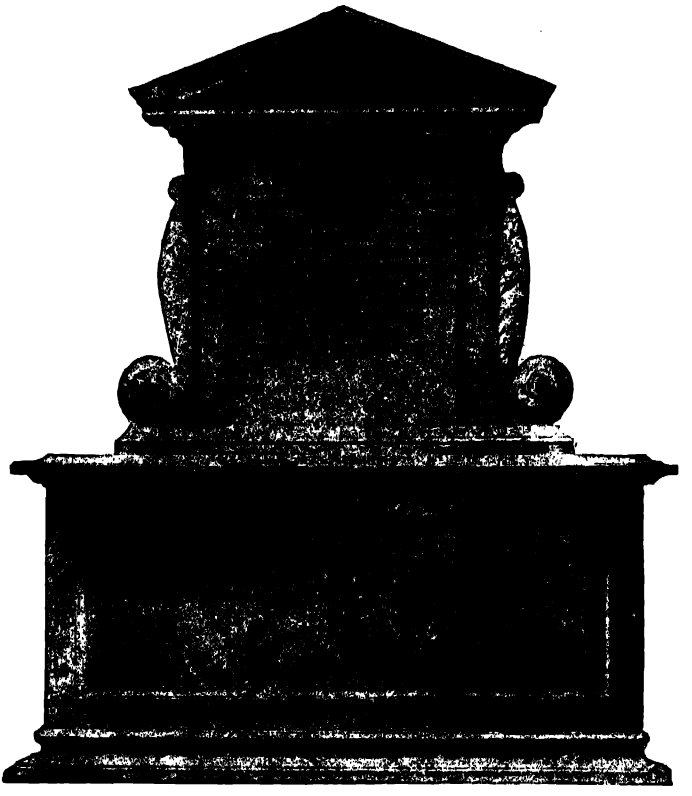
Faſhioning

XII. Morall vertues.

LONDON
Printed for William Ponſonbie.
1590.

Title-page of "The Faerie Queene" 1590

welcomed Spenser to his house, and a double marriage there celebrated was the theme of the poet's beautiful *Prothalamion*, praised by Coleridge for "the swan-like movement of the lines." But the great business to which the poetry ought to have conduced, Spenser's repatriation in England, made no progress. Perhaps he stood in his own light by composing, though he did not at the time publish, his *View of the Present State of Ireland, Discoursed by Way of a Dialogue between Eudoxus and Irenæus*, which may well have convinced the Government that he was the right sort of man for Munster. The entirely unsympathetic tone of this able tract as regards the native Irish has been made a subject of reproach to Spenser, and justly so from the point of view both of abstract right and of abstract policy. He merely feels, however, as colonists always feel who find themselves confronted with a hostile indigenous population, with what seems to them insufficient support from the mother country, and are naturally impatient of criticism from "the gentlemen who sit at home at ease." Ireland, in fact, had dealt a much heavier blow at her nationality than any Spenser could devise by her rejection of the Reformation. Had she become Protestant, the Bible and Prayer-book would have been read in the vernacular by all who could read at all; the ancient language, as in Wales, would have been kept alive by the services of the Church;[1] and Erse literature, far from needing any artificial revival, would have come down to our days in a continuous stream. In such a case the distinction between the Anglo-Scotch and the Irish elements of the population would hardly have existed. It needed religious differences to keep them apart, and prevent the Elizabethan or Jacobean settler from becoming, like his Anglo-Norman predecessor, *Hibernis ipsis Hibernior.*



The Tomb of Edmund Spenser in Westminster Abbey

[1] The writer can never forget the energy with which he has heard Mr. Gladstone descant on this theme in its relation to Wales.

Dejected in spirits, and failing in health, Spenser returned to Ireland early in 1597. Little is recorded of his history until, in September 1598, he was made Sheriff of the county of Cork, with many expressions of approval of his valuable services. The moment was most critical. The insurgent Irish, temporarily victorious, were at the very time planning an expedition against the English colonists of Cork. The storm burst in October, and carried all before it. Spenser's mansion at Kilcolman was sacked and burned. He and his wife escaped to Cork with four children—a fifth is said by Ben Jonson to have perished in the flames, but, unless there had been a birth of twins, Spenser's family can hardly have been so numerous. In December, Sir Thomas Norris, the President of Munster, shows confidence in Spenser by sending him to London with despatches, including, no doubt, instructions to make a private report. But grief and hardship had undermined his constitution, and he died at his lodgings in King Street, Westminster, on January 16, 1599. The stories of the privations he underwent must be greatly exaggerated, including as they do the statement that Essex offered him bounty which he declined. He had never been wealthy, and his personal property had probably perished in the burning of his house, but it cannot be believed that he would have been sent on an important mission in a state of destitution, or that ready aid would not have been forthcoming from his London friends. The general appreciation of his greatness was shown by his interment, at the expense of Essex, in Westminster Abbey, within a few yards of the grave of Chaucer; poets, says Camden, thronging to the funeral, and casting their elegies and the pens that had written them into the tomb. A monument intended by Elizabeth was frustrated by a greedy courtier, but one was eventually erected by the Countess of Dorset.

Spenser's widow soon married again. His Munster property, recovered by Essex's campaign in 1599, passed to his eldest son Sylvanus, whose Roman Catholic wife seems to have brought up her son William in her own religion, wherefor, under the Draconic legislation of Cromwell, he incurred the penalty of transplantation into Connaught. This was remitted upon his giving proof of his return to Protestantism, but the forfeited estate was not recovered until after the Restoration. Having thus cast his lot with the Protestant interest, William Spenser rendered such services to William III. as to acquire extensive possessions in Galway and Roscommon, as well as the estates of an unlucky cousin who had taken the wrong side. The family is now extinct in the male line, but many living persons claim descent from William Spenser's granddaughter Rosamond.

The character, fortunes, and genius of Spenser present a striking affinity to those of his great contemporary Camoens. Both united the soldier and the man of affairs to the scholar; but Camoens was more of the soldier than Spenser, and Spenser more of the scholar than Camoens. Both were unhappy in their attachments; each left his native country in the vain hope of fortune, and ever sighed to return; each was unanimously acclaimed in his lifetime as the greatest poet his country had yet produced, yet neither reaped the reward that such an acknowledgment should have brought; and each, if tradition might be implicitly trusted, died in absolute want. Each early conceived the design of exalting his country by an immortal poem, and each owes the greater part of his fame to its more or less complete accomplishment; while at the same time each gained

such eminence in lyric and pastoral that, had every line of his epic perished he would still have been a very considerable poet. In character Spenser is more amiable and attractive than the irascible and frequently wrong-headed Portuguese; while the latter occasionally reveals a tragic grandeur of soul to which Spenser could never have attained. Spenser was essentially a man of refinement, of culture, of urbanity; a chivalrous idealist, a Platonist by force of natural affinity: his transference to the stormy arena of Ireland was a misfortune for poetry as well as for the poet. Representative of the age of Elizabeth as he was, he would have been even more at home in the age of Victoria.



The Red Cross Knight

From the 1598 edition of "The Faerie Queene"

Keats, complimenting his friend Cowden Clarke on his acquaintance with Spenser, describes him as "a forester deep in thy midmost trees." The phrase is felicitous, for Spenser's poetical domain resembles a forest more nearly than it resembles a champaign, or a mountain, or an ocean. Its attributes are neither those of well-ordered culture nor of wild sublimity; rather those of rich woodland, full of beautiful products and beautiful creatures, yet withal pathless and difficult of access in many parts, and not to be comprehended at one view from any quarter. Add that, like a forest, with its secular growths and growths of yesterday, it is at once old and young—young with its fresh poetical spirit, old with its obsolete diction and general aspect of a bygone age. If we are to have a guide through this enchanted region we must find a trusty one, for perhaps no other great poem with a great purpose so conceals this purpose as *The Faerie Queene*. It is, in the first place, unfinished, and the argument must be sought outside the poem. Homer gives us the subject

of the *Iliad* in the very first line: "Sing, O Muse, the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus." Milton, like a stately argosy, is some time in getting under way; yet the first five lines of *Paradise Lost* explain the purpose of the poem. But though Spenser gives a general definition of the theme of *The Faerie Queene*, "Fierce wars and faithful lives shall moralise my song," he nowhere in the poem discloses the reason, apart from the delightful exercise of the imagination, which made him create so many chivalrous champions and beautiful ladies, and uncouth giants and unshapely monsters, and wily enchanters and alluring sorceresses, and devise such an interminable series of adventures.

We shall not find a more trustworthy guide than Dean Church, who, putting into few words Spenser's own somewhat confused explanation in his letter to Raleigh, tells us that "he meant to shadow forth, under the figure of twelve knights and in their various exploits, the characteristics of a gentleman or noble person fashioned in virtuous and gentle discipline. He took his machinery from the popular legends about King Arthur, and his heads of moral philosophy from the current Aristotelian Catalogue of the Schools." The Faerie Queene herself, says Spenser, is meant "for glory in general intention," but in particular for Elizabeth, and Faery Land for her kingdom. Remote, therefore, as Spenser's verse seems from ordinary human affairs, he emulated Virgil, who, seeming merely to tell a romantic story, has expressed the innermost idea of Roman nationality as it was expressed in the best minds of Rome in the Augustan age. But this Spenser has not achieved, principally because his allegory is so loose and so devoid of obvious connection with the personage whose pre-eminence it professes to shadow forth. How can it be otherwise when the august Gloriana, Queen of Faerie, the alleged centre and animating spirit of the action, does not appear in the poem at all? It begins:

> A gentle knight was pricking in the plain,
> Y-cladd in mighty arms and silver shield.

In the third stanza we learn that this champion is bound upon a great adventure:

> That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
> That greatest glorious Queen of Faeryland.

This is all; nothing to show that Gloriana is Elizabeth. When, therefore, we by-and-by encounter other allegorical figures, we have no means of identifying them. Knowing so little of Gloriana, we could not, but for the above-mentioned letter to Raleigh, have been sure that the Faerie Queene's enemies represented actual antagonists of Elizabeth. They seem just such uncomely and uncanny creatures as the romancer provides for the knight-errant. With the clue afforded by the letter we may, indeed, finding that the enchanter Archimago

> Told of saints and Popes, and evermore
> He strewed an Ave Mary after and before,

surmise in him no other than the Pope himself. And we can then see that the witch Duessa, beautiful in semblance, foul in fact, the ruin of the young

knights whom she seduces, is the very counterfeit presentment of Mary Queen of Scots as she appeared to a loyal subject of Elizabeth. But these figures are brought into no vital connection with Gloriana, who comes to light regularly in the dedication to each successive book, and then goes to sleep like old Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser Mountain. She is made a heroine on far too easy terms; she should have been what Una is, a living, moving, suffering personage. It is, no doubt, perfectly true that the respect due to his sovereign would have prevented Spenser from exhibiting Elizabeth in any perilous or equivocal situation, and hence that he cannot, as a courtier, do his part as a poet. But whatever the cause, the effect is the same; his poem's relation to the times is not sufficiently distinct; hence, with all its innumerable beauties, it is not an epic.



Mary, Queen of Scots

From "Inscriptiones Historicæ Regum Scotorum" 1602

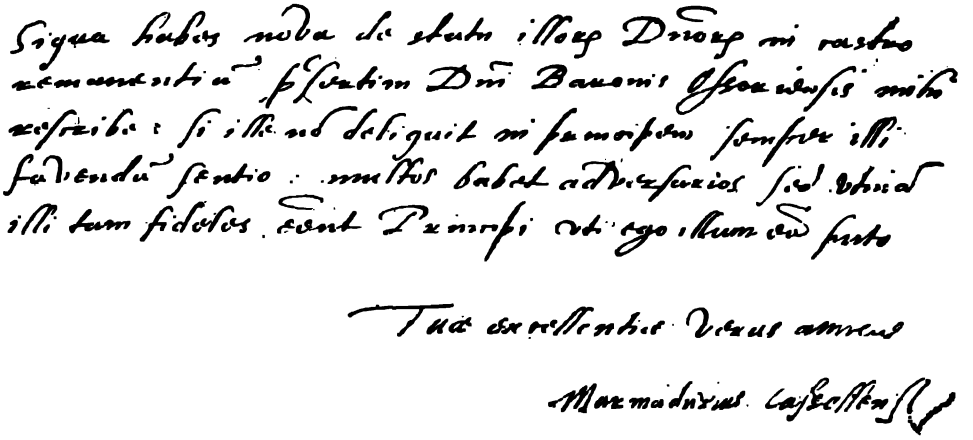
Spenser has succeeded better in another part of his plan—the embodiment of the perfect gentleman. Unfortunately, the exhibition is not complete. Twelve special virtues, each deemed essential to this character, were to have been set forth in a corresponding number of books, each divided into twelve cantos. The portion completed embraces Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy; a fragment of the lost or unfinished book of Constancy is also preserved. The plan is more consistently carried out in the first books than in their successors, in which, as Dean Church says, "the poem becomes an elastic framework, into which Spenser puts whatever interests him and tempts him to composition." One effect of this is to bring the poem nearer to actual life. We still need a clue, but if we compare it with contemporary history we shall see that Spenser's head is becoming fuller of what is going on around him; and, writing as he is in Ireland, alone with his own fancies, he gives himself the rein, and introduces contemporary transactions with less disguise than he thought needful in the earlier books. The Legend of Justice, in the fifth book, for instance, shadows forth the pacification of Ireland by Lord Grey de Wilton, figured by the hero Artegall. Mary Stuart reappears as Florimel and Radegund; Elizabeth, though still addressed as Gloriana, is Britomart, and several other characters besides. These things should be known, else part of the poet's intention escapes us, and he seems a mere melodious voice. We must clearly understand that in reading him we are not only drawing from a fountain of fancy, imagination, and music,

but are conversing with the soldier, courtier, and man of affairs, the loyal servant of his idolised Queen, the friend of Leicester, Sidney, and Raleigh, himself a sentinel on one of the most vulnerable frontiers of the empire, the half-conquered and quarter-civilised province of Munster—anything rather than the idle singer of an empty day whom he so much resembles at first sight. We are further imbibing the spirit and seeing with the eyes of a Puritan, although one of most gentle type, a supporter of Leicester's "No peace with Spain" policy, in strictness of morals and in the culture of high scholarship a forerunner of Milton, whose place he would in the main have filled could they have exchanged epochs.

As a poet Spenser need fear no comparison with his great contemporaries Tasso and Camoens; but the one point where they have most conspicuously succeeded is that where he has most conspicuously failed: he has not, like them, achieved an epic. If not quite an epic poet, however, he is much more than a mere romancer; his place is rather with the special objects of his emulation, Boiardo and Ariosto. These poets, Ariosto at least, have undoubtedly succeeded better in their object of glorifying the petty House of Este than Spenser has in glorifying the great Elizabeth, yet this is not entirely gain. Ariosto perpetually dispels the glamour of his romance by dragging in his patrons, and his panegyric wears the aspect of adulation. His real advantages over Spenser are the point and clearness of his style, and his great superiority as a narrator. In invention the two poets are much upon a par, but in moral dignity Spenser stands on a far higher plane. Ariosto was indifferent to the great wave of new light and new truth which even in his day was breaking upon the world, but which in Spenser's had mounted far higher, and so upbears him that his blemishes seem little more than drift and wrack lightly borne on the crest of the billow. He owes much to the noble stanza which he elaborated from the hints of the Italians—a stanza which allows of the most majestic volume of sound and the greatest variety of musical effects of any in our language, and so far beyond the resources of other languages that even the German translator, whom the Sanskrit *sloka* does not daunt, commonly puts the reader off with an inferior substitute. Even when the external form is successfully copied, the inner melody of stanzas like these must be the despair of every translator:

Eftsoons they heard a most melodious sound
Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,
Such as attonce might not on living ground
Save in this Paradise, be heard elsewhere:
Right hard it was for wight which did it hear
To rede what manner music that mote be;
For all that pleasing is to living ear
Was there consorted in one harmony;
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
The angelical soft trembling voices made
To the instruments divine respondence meet;



Document in the handwriting of Edmund Spenser

The silver sounding instruments did meet
With the bass murmur of the waters' fall;
The waters' fall with difference discrete,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answeréd to all.

In one respect Spenser's example might have been injurious—his abuse of the poet's privilege of enriching his mother tongue. "In my opinion," says Kirke in his preface to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, "it is one special praise of many which are due to this poet that he hath laboured to restore, as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words as have been long time out of use, and almost clean disherited." The doctrine of the survival of the fittest was not well understood in Spenser's day, and he went so far not only in vain attempts at restitution but in needless innovation as to raise up formidable difficulties both for himself and his reader, augmented by the obstinate conservatism of his editors, who, if they could not meddle with his *adaws* and *singults*, might at least have modernised his orthography. It is indeed proof of his greatness that neither an unfinished poem, nor a faulty plan, nor an uninterpreted allegory, nor monotony of incident, nor inability to depict character, nor obsolete language, nor antiquated spelling, should have kept him out of the hands of the lovers of poetry. But he has not, like Shakespeare and Milton, been able to subjugate those who do not love poetry for its own sake.

Spenser's amplitude of detail, partly cause and partly consequence of his stanza, renders it difficult to illustrate him by quotation, for his choicest passages are long. The two following, briefer than usual with him, afford magnificently contrasted examples of splendid description, the one all gloom the other all glory:

THE HOUSE OF PRIDE

High above all a cloth of State was spread,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny Day;
On which there sate, most brave embellishéd
With royal robes and gorgeous array,
A maiden Queen that shone as Titan's ray
In glistening gold and peerless precious stone;
Yet her bright blazing beauty did assay
To dim the brightness of her glorious throne
As envying herself that too exceeding shone:

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus' fairest child,
That did presume his father's fiery wain,
And flaming mouths of steeds, unwonted wilde,
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rein:
Proud of such glory and advancement vain,
While flashing beams do dim his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin way most beaten plain,
And rapt with whirling wheels, inflames the skyen,
With fire not made to burn, but fairly for to shine.

So proud she shinéd in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdain,

And sitting high for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornful feet was lain
A dreadful Dragon with a hideous train;
And in her hand she held a mirror bright,
Wherein her face she often viewéd fair,
And in her self-loved semblance took delight,
For she was wondrous fair, as any living wight.

THE CAVE OF MAMMON

The house's form within was rude and strong,
Like an huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,
From whose rough vault the ragged breaches hong,
Embossed with massy gold of glorious gift,
And with rich metal loaded every rift,
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;
And over them Arachne high did lift
Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,
Enwrapt in foulé smoke and clouds more black than jet.

Both roof and floor and walls were all of gold,
But overgrown with dust and old decay,
And hid in darkness; that none could behold
The view thereof; for light of cheerful day
Did never in that house itself display
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away,
Or as the Moon, clothéd with cloudy night,
Does show to him that walks in fear and sad affright.

In all that room was nothing to be seen
But huge great iron chests, and coffers strong,
All barred with double bands, that none could ween
Them to efforce by violence or wrong.
On every side they placéd were along;
But all the ground with skulls was scatteréd.
And dead men's bones, which round about were flong;
Whose lives, it seeméd, whilom there were shed,
And their vile carcases now left unburiéd.

The following is a good example of Spenser's more soft and luxurious style of description, and his power of allying pageantry with poetry:

Soon as she up out of her deadly fit
Arose, she bade her chariot to be brought;
And all her sisters that with her did sit
Bade eke attonce their chariots to be sought
Tho full of bitter grief and pensive thought,
She to her wagon clomb; clomb all the rest,
And forth together went with sorrow fraught.
The waves, obedient to their behest,
Them yielded ready passage, and their rage surceased.

Great Neptune stood amazéd at their sight,
While on his broad round back they softly slid,
And eke himself mourned at their mournful plight,
Yet wist not what their wailing meant, yet did,

For great compassion of their sorrow bid
His mighty waters to them buxom be;
Eftsoons the roaring billows still abid,
And all the grisly monsters of the sea
Stood gaping at their gait, and wondered them to see.

A team of dolphins rangéd in array
Drew the smooth chariot of sad Cymoent:
They were all taught by Tritons to obey
To the long reins at her commandement:
As swift as swallows on the waves they went,
That their broad flaggy fins no foam did rear,
Nor bubbling roundel they behind them sent.
The rest of other fishes drawen were,
Which with their finny oars the swelling sea did shear.

Soon as they bin arrived upon the brim
Of the rich strand, their chariots they forlore,
And let their temed fishes softly swim
Along the margent of the foamy shore,
Lest they their fins should bruise, and surbate sore
Their tender feet upon the stony ground:
And coming to the place where all in gore
And crudely blood enwallowéd they found
The luckless Marinell lying in deadly swound.

In this beautiful piece of pageantry there are few features unborrowed from the general repertory of poets: but Spenser excels all by his consummate ease of handling, as though he saw Proteus and Triton not by glimpses, as Wordsworth was fain to do. but habitually: and by the singular fitness of his ample, liquid, booming verse to describe the sea and the things of the sea. He neither attains the sublime nor astonishes by originality of observation or intensity of description, but lavishes beauties of the strictly poetical order as from a horn of plenty. His effects are broad and general; he disregards minutiæ, and cannot sustain searching criticism. He makes Neptune still the waves for the nymphs, forgetting that they had already done this for themselves. He could not well have found epithets less descriptive of dolphins' fins than "broad" and "flaggy"; and the nymphs' solicitude lest the fishes should hurt their feet seems, to say the least, superfluous..

The most considerable of Spenser's minor works, and the first that gained him reputation, is his *Shepherd's Calendar*. This was published in 1579, under the modest pseudonym "Immerito," and under the ægis of "E.K.," probably Edward Kirke, who provides the twelve eclogues, each corresponding to a month in the year, with pithy arguments, and in a diplomatic preface, which is also a model of good writing and sound criticism, "smooths the raven down" of the crabbed Gabriel Harvey, who is soothed by an appeal "to pluck out of the hateful darkness those so many excellent English poems" of his own. The extraordinary success of these pastorals might seem surprising if it were not remembered that three of them are satires on the corruptions of the clergy, and if the state of English poetry in their day were not taken into account. Surrey and Wyatt had written excellent lyrics, but no long poem of merit—

scarcely even of high aim—had been produced by any native poet south of the Tweed since the days of Chaucer. It was much to show that such work was possible, and at that time the pastoral was an admitted convention. The present age demands reality, and as peasants are better portrayed in prose than in verse, George Sand and Thomas Hardy have dethroned Theocritus, and the metrical pastoral only survives as a *jeu d'esprit* or representation of idyllic existence in an imaginary paradise or an imaginary past. Spenser's contemporaries found nothing obsolete or tiresome in his machinery; he was, indeed, better equipped than most by being actually provided with a faithless or obdurate mistress. Even so, not much of his work is really devoted to the plainings of unsuccessful love. His shepherds discourse rather of politics



From "The Shepherd's Calendar" 1597

than theology, and he even extols Bacchus above Venus as a source of poetical inspiration:

All otherwise the state of Poet stands;
For lordly love is such a tyrant fell,
That where he rules all power he doth expel;
The vaunted verse a vacant head demands,
Ne wont with crabbed care the Muses dwell:
Unwisely weaves, that takes two webs in hands.

Whoever casts to compass weighty prize,
And thinks to throw out thundering words of threat,
Let pour in lavish cups and thrifty bits of meat,
For Bacchus' fruit is friend to Phœbus wise;
And when with wine the brain begins to sweat,
The numbers flow as fast as spring doth rise.

Thou kenst not, Percy, how the rhyme should rage,
O! if my temples were distained with wine,
And girt in garlands of wild ivy twine,
How I could rear the Muse on stately stage,
And teach her tread aloft in buskin fine,
With quaint Bellona in her equipage!

This seems to evince Spenser's impatience to devote his full powers to *The Faerie Queene*, which we know that he was contemplating. Notwithstanding the humility of the conclusion (imitated from Statius), where he disclaims rivalry not only with Chaucer but with Piers Plowman, he evidently did not want a high and just confidence in himself, though he modestly expresses it through the mouth of another:

Colin, to hear thy rhymes and rondelays,
Which thou wert wont on wasteful hills to sing,
I more delight than lark in summer days,
Whose echo made the neighbour groves to ring,



From "The Shepherd's Calendar" 1597

And taught the birds, which in the lower spring
Did shroud in shady leaves from sunny rays,
Frame to thy song their cheerful chirruping,
Or hold their peace for shame of thy sweet lays.

I saw Calliope with Muses mo,
Soon as thy oaten pipe began to sound,
Their ivory lutes and tamburins forego,
And from the fountains where they sat around
Run after hastily thy silver sound;
But, when they came where thou thy skill didst show,
They drew aback, as half with shame confound,
Shepherd, to see them in their art outgo.

Here is the germ of the Spenserian stanza, and the same rich volume of melody streams forth whenever Spenser writes in decasyllabics. The language has become more opulent and flexible than when the rhyme royal represented the *ne plus ultra* of the metrical art, and enhanced power of verbal music only corresponds with enhanced power of verbal expression. In presence of these gains, we may well overlook the artificiality of pseudo-pastoral mannerism, not more conspicuous in Spenser than in the rest of the successors of Theocritus.

Spenser's nuptial odes

An artificial style, indeed, suited Spenser. Like Ariosto, but unlike Camoens; unlike also his great successor Milton, he is unvisited by any snatch of song. It can never be said of him that he sings as the bird sings. He can marshal grand harmonies, but is never himself enthralled by a simple spontaneous melody. He would have found it easier to create Ariel than to write Ariel's song. This is remarkable, as no period of English literature has been so rich in light melodious carols as the age of Elizabeth and James, but he is entirely unaffected by the pervading atmosphere. He is at his very best as a lyric poet in his two nuptial odes, the *Epithalamion* on his own marriage, the *Prothalamion* on the double wedding at Essex House in 1596, when the nature of the subject invited strains voluminous, intricate, and majestic. These are like grand performances on the organ, in which all less sonorous instruments, if such there be, are swallowed up and lost. The *Epithalamion* in particular is a performance of the class of Milton's *At a Solemn Music* and Dryden's great pair of odes. If nowhere quite attaining the splendour of Milton's ode or of the opening stanza of the monody on Mistress Killigrew, the poetic flight is longer than the first and more equable than the second; if it impresses the mind less powerfully than *Alexander's Feast*, the cause is Dryden's not wholly legitimate employment of objective description and scene-painting. Neither Milton nor Dryden appears indebted to it, but it has manifestly influenced another great English ode, Tennyson's on the death of the Duke of Wellington. There is, perhaps, no poem of equal extent in the language of such level merit where the poet, rising from the first to a lofty height, remains poised so long on steady wing without appreciable rise or descent. Two stanzas, nevertheless, must content us:

Now is my love all ready forth to come:
 Let all the virgins therefore well await;
And ye, fresh boys, that tend upon her groom,
 Prepare yourselves, for he is coming straight.
Set all your things in seemly good array,
Fit for so joyful day;
 The joyfullest day that ever Sun did see.
Fair Sun! show forth thy favourable ray,
 And let thy lifefull heat not fervent be,
For fear of burning her sunshiny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O fairest Phœbus! father of the Muse!
 If ever I did honour thee aright,
 Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
Do not thy servant's simple boon refuse;
But let this day, let this one day, be mine;
Let all the rest be thine:
Then I thy sovereign praises loud will sing,
That all the woods shall answer, and their echo ring

Hark! how the minstrels 'gin to shrill aloud
 Their merry music that resounds from far
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,[1]
 That well agree withouten breach or jar,

[1] Fiddle.

But most all the damsels do delight
When they their timbrels smite,
 And thereunto do dance and carol sweet,
That all the senses they do ravish quite;
 The whiles the boys run up and down the street,
Crying aloud with strong, confused noise
As if it were one voice.
Hymen! io Hymen! Hymen! they do shout,
That even to the heavens their shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people standing all about,
As in approvance, do thereto applaud,
And loud advance her laud;
And ever more they Hymen! Hymen! sing
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

These stately strophes would not have existed without Italian precedents; but the form is not precisely that of any Italian *canzone*, and the thoughts are entirely Spenser's.

Among Spenser's other minor poems, perhaps the most remarkable are his four *Hymns*, especially the first two, addressed respectively to Love and Beauty, poems such as Plato might have written if he had persevered in his youthful endeavours to win renown as a poet. The first celebrates the ancient myth of Love the Demiurgus, the orderer and fashioner of the chaotic universe:

For ere this world's still moving mighty mass
 Out of great Chaos' ugly prison crept,
In which his goodly face long hidden was
 From heaven's view, and in deep darkness kept,
 Love, that had now long time securely slept
In Venus' lap, unarmed then and naked,
Gan rear his head, by Clotho being waked.

And taking to him wings of his own heat,
 Kindled at first from heaven's life-giving fire,
He gan to move out of his idle seat;
 Weakly at first, but after with desire
 Lifted aloft, he gan to mount up higher,
And, like fresh eagle, made his hardy flight
Through all that great wide waste, yet wanting light.

The second hymn is no less Platonic, praising ideal Beauty, the only true reality:

How vainly then do idle wits invent
 That beauty is nought else but mixture made
Of colours fair, and goodly temperament
 Of pure complexions that shall quickly fade
 And pass away, like to a summer's shade;
Or that it is but comely composition
Of parts well measured with meek disposition. . . .

But ah! believe me, there is more than so,
 That works such wonders in the minds of men;
I, that have often proved, too well it know,

And whoso list the like assays to ken,
Shall find by trial, and confess it then,
That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem,
An outward show of things that only seem:

For that same goodly hue of white and red
With which the cheeks are sprinkled, shall decay;
And those sweet rosy leaves, so fairly spread
Upon the lips, shall fade and fall away
To that they were, e'en to corrupted clay:
That golden wire, those sparkling stars so bright,
Shall turn to dust, and lose their goodly light.

But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds which kindleth lovers' fire,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay;
But, when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native planet shall retire,
For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky.

The Tears of the Muses contains much fine and even splendid writing, but, put forth as it was when Marlowe was flowering and Shakespeare blossoming, and Spenser himself had just published with universal applause the first part of *The Faerie Queene*, it would appear ridiculous but for the strong probability that it was an early composition dragged forth to eke out the volume of *Complaints*, in which it appeared in 1591. Spenser's Muses are indeed doleful creatures! There seems some hope of Urania, who observes that, although the study of astronomy is now greatly neglected,

I feed on sweet contentment of my thought;

but "the contented mind" seems far from being "a continual feast" in her case:

With that she wept and wailed so piteously
As if her eyes had been two springing wells,
And all the rest, her sorrow to supply,

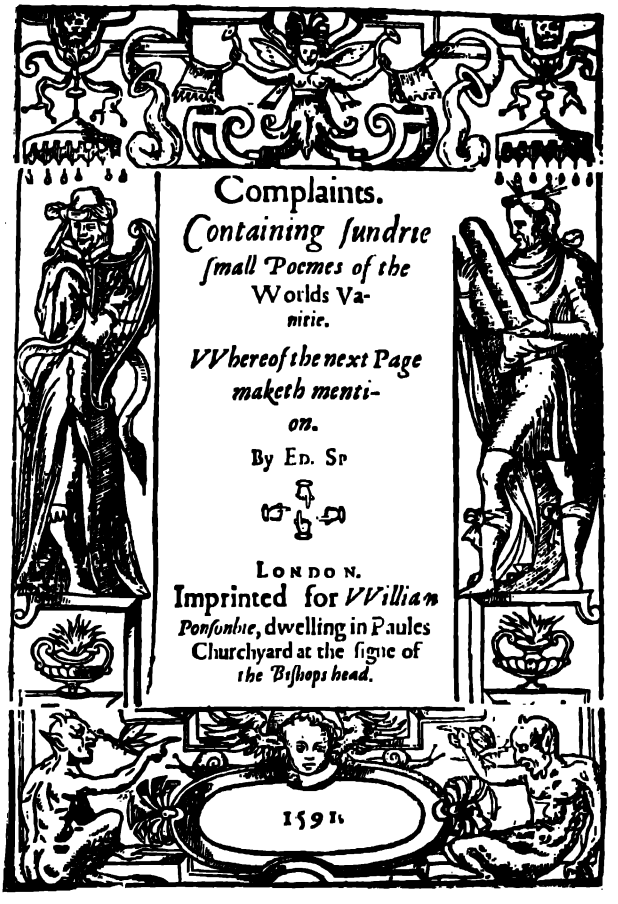
[As if it needed any supplement!]

Did throw forth shrieks and cries and dreary yells.

A performance eight times repeated. There is no good reason for connecting the poem with Shakespeare's *Thrice Three Muses Mourning for the death Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.*

Spenser's turn for elegy was more happily exercised in his *Daphnaida*, an elegy on the death of Lady Gorges, and *Astrophel*, a tribute to Sidney. *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* is eminent for fine marine painting, and affords interesting glimpses of the author and his circle, especially Raleigh, "the Shepherd of the Ocean," to whose persuasion he attributes his visit to England. *Muiopotmos*, a poem on the fate of a butterfly, is an elegant

trifle, and *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, a piece in the spirit of Chaucer, evinces a genuine talent for satire, and is a masterly example of the heroic couplet. Spenser's sonnets (*Amorctti*), composed while he was wooing the second object of his affections, who became his wife, are neither like those of the Italian masters' embodiments of a single thought carved and chiselled to perfection, nor streams of overmastering emotion like the best of Shakespeare's. The metrical form is a compromise with the difficulties of the Italian, and, while more artificial than Shakespeare's, lacks his fluent strength. Spenser's genius was, no doubt, too exuberant for the severe restraint of the sonnet, and the glory of naturalising the Italian form was reserved for the more condensed and pregnant Milton. Yet, though his sonnets generally want the needful weight and concentration, few are devoid of charm :



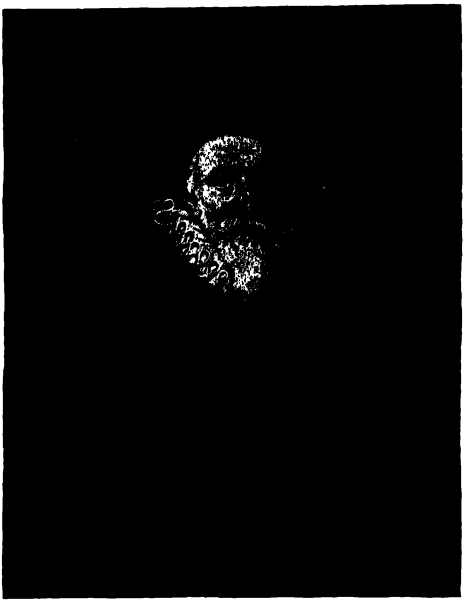
Title-page of the "Complaints," 1591

Like as the culver on the baréd bough
Sits mourning for the absence of her mate,
And in her songs sends many a wishful vow
For his return that seems to linger late;
So I alone, now left disconsolate,
Mourn to myself the absence of my love,
And wandering here and there all desolate,
Seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove.
Ne joy of aught that under heaven doth hove
Can comfort me, but her own joyous sight;
Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move
In her unspotted pleasance to delight.
Dark is my day whiles her fair light I miss,
And dead my life that wants such lovely bliss.

Spenser's translations are not the least remarkable of his works. His fecundity of diction would have unfitted him for literal translation, but renders him admirable in paraphrase, whether of the dignified rhetoric of

Du Bellay's *Ruins of Rome* or the lively mock heroic of the pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*, though one wishes that among the liberties he took with this had been the liberty of abbreviating it. The anonymous author of *Britain's Ida* has been defrauded of the reputation due to a pretty poem, but at the same time has vastly multiplied the number of his readers by the freak of an editor who thought fit to publish it under the name of Spenser, among whose works it has continued to find a place.

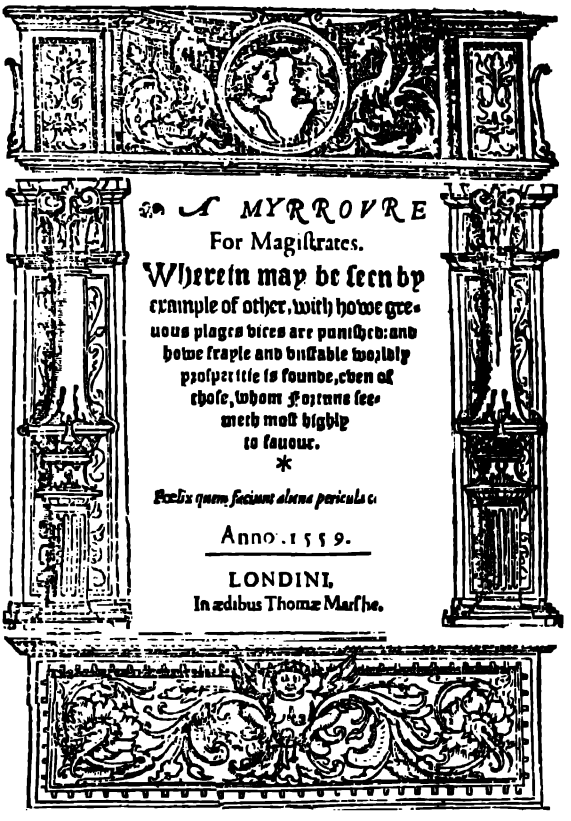
Upon a general review of Spenser's achievement, and regarding poetry simply as poetry, without regard to the truths of which it may be made the vehicle, we cannot dissent from Professor Saintsbury's judgment that, "putting Shakespeare aside, only two English poets can challenge Spenser for the primacy: these are Milton and Shelley." If we deem, as we do, that the challenge can be successfully sustained in both instances, the ground is, as appears to us, Spenser's deficiency in the highest and rarest endowment of the poet, sublimity. Milton almost dwells in the region of the sublime, Shelley treads it frequently, Spenser enters it but seldom. The conception of the two cantos on Mutability appended to *The Faerie Queene* is undoubtedly sublime, but its sublimity does not extend to the verbal expression, as would have been the case with Shelley or Milton. Nor does Spenser possess any considerable power of delineating tragic emotion. These deductions made, there is scarcely any strictly poetical excellence which it is possible to refuse him.



Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset

Spenser's appearance in the domain of English poetry is most striking from its suddenness and its immediate recognition as the phenomenon of which all who were jealous of the honour of English literature had been rather desirous than expectant. It came just at the time when Sidney was with reason deploring the barrenness of the poetical field in England, and the instant acclamation of Spenser as the man who had taken away that reproach, and again given England a place among the lands of the Muses, is creditable to the intelligence and patriotism of the time. It may almost be said that night covers all performances in English poetry from the deaths of Surrey and Wyatt to the publication of *The Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579; yet upon careful retrospective scrutiny we may discover that the continuity, pointed out with admirable perception by Shelley as one of the main characteristics of English

poetry, had not ceased; and that, in particular, Spenser had had one predecessor who wanted nothing but perseverance to have enacted Varius to his Virgil. This was THOMAS SACKVILLE, Earl of Dorset (1536–1608). He was the son of Sir Richard Sackville, a supple and dexterous courtier, who, making it his chief business to stand well with the powers that were, was always filling some lucrative office, but deserves well of literature for having urged Ascham to write the *Schoolmaster*. His son also had a genius for official life, but the statesman did not extinguish the poet until he had initiated two remarkable works, which he allowed to be completed by inferior hands. About 1557 he formed the idea, partly inspired by Virgil and Dante, partly by Boccaccio and Lydgate, of a visitation of the realms of the shades, where the poet should hold discourse with the most tragic figures of English history. He wrote the induction and the dialogue with Richard III.'s Buckingham, "with," says Dean Church, "a pathetic majesty, a genuine sympathy for the precariousness of greatness, which seem a prelude to the Elizabethan drama." The task was then handed over to GEORGE FERRERS and WILLIAM BALDWIN, two poets about Court who as minstrels were mere journeymen. The former, however, was thought to have done the State some service by composing interludes and masques to divert Edward VI.'s grief for the execution of the Protector Somerset; and the latter, in general a persistent ballad-monger, has been recently ascertained to be the author of a witty satire, *Beware the Cat*. They worked at Sackville's project according to contract, and published it as *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559–1561). Sackville, meanwhile, had made an epoch-marking contribution to English literature by his share in the first English tragedy in blank verse, *Gorboduc*, acted at the Inner Temple on Twelfth Night, 1561, sixteen days before another epoch-marking


A MYRROVRE
For Magiſtrates.
Wherein may be ſeen by
example of other, with howe gre-
uous plagues vices are punished: and
howe fraple and vnſtable worldly
proſperitie is founde, euen of
thoſe, whom Fortune ſee-
meth moſt highly
to fauour.
*
Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula c
Anno. 1559.
LONDINI,
In ædibus Thomæ Marſhe.

Title-page of "A Mirror for Magistrates," 1559

The first edition. The enlarged edition, including the Induction, appeared in 1563

event, the birth of Francis Bacon. This remarkable production will be noticed along with dramatic literature. As the first three acts are the composition of Thomas Norton it is, perhaps, more reasonable to assign the original conception to him than to Sackville, but Sackville's part is much the more poetical. After its representation he bade adieu to poetry altogether, and was for the rest of his prosperous life the busy, useful, second-class statesman, upon whom a costly duty like the entertainment of the Cardinal de Châtillon, or a disagreeable one like the announcement of her condemnation to Mary Queen of Scots, could always be imposed; who discharged diplomatic missions efficiently, and submitted to be disowned when it suited his royal mistress's purpose; who enriched himself without suspicion of corruption or extortion, and worked his way up to the great place of Treasurer, which was conferred upon him after the death of Burghley, and which he retained until his death. He was also Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and a benefactor to the Bodleian Library. The splendid Tudor mansion, Knole Park, Sevenoaks, was built by him, and continues in the possession of his family.

Both as a narrative poet and a dramatist Sackville exerted a considerable influence upon Elizabethan poetry, and he must have gained a great name if his life had been devoted to literature. He shows no token of lyrical faculty, and the heaviness of his blank verse in *Gorboduc* renders it very doubtful whether he possessed any; but he wields the rhyme royal with perfect mastery; and the vigour of his allegorical impersonations reveals a truly poetical imagination. His great fault is insistence; he fairly wrings his subject out, and, straining his own imagination to the uttermost, leaves no scope to his reader's. All his subjects are taken from the gate of hell; it must remain a question whether the same poetical power which there stood him in such stead might have served him equally well to depict human action and the joy of life. The following is his impersonation of Old Age, one of a gallery of equally striking pictures of the doleful figures which the poet encounters ere he enters Charon's bark under the guidance of Sorrow:

> And next, in order sad, Old Age we found,
> His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind;
> With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
> As on the place where Nature had assigned
> To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined
> His vital thread, and ended with their knife
> The fleeting course of fast declining life.
>
> There heard we him with broke and hollow plaint
> Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
> And all for nought his wretched mind torment
> With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
> And fresh delights of lusty youth forewast[1];
> Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek,
> And to be young again of Jove beseek!

[1] Wasted.

But an the cruel fates so fixed be
That time prepast can not return again,
This one request of Jove yet prayéd he,
That in such withered plight and wretched pain
As eld, accompanied with his loathsome train,
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might a while yet linger forth his life,

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where Death, when he the mortal corpse hast slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it,
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light, but, in the ground y-lain,
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had ne'er into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forepast, as though it brought him good
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone,
He would have mused, and marvelled much whereon
This wretched Age should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life doth but length his pain.

Crookbacked he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed;
Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on four.
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pitted, and he with age forlore,
His withered fist still knocking at Death's door,
Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath,
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

The mastery both of verbal and metrical expression in a youth of twenty-one are certainly very remarkable. If Queen Elizabeth had possessed a nice discernment in poetry she would have discovered Sackville's fitness for the official laureateship for which Spenser was too great and the other contemporary poets too small; and we should have possessed a series of historical poems of much poetical merit and even greater historical value.

Sackville was a born poet, diverted from poetry by the pursuits of statesmanship. GEORGE GASCOIGNE (1525?–1577) is, on the other hand, an unusual instance of a poet who wrote, or at least published, nothing until past forty. He was the son of a Bedfordshire knight, and a descendant of the Chief Justice who long, though it seems undeservedly, enjoyed the renown of having laid a Prince of Wales by the heels. Choosing the Prince rather than the ancestor for his model, Gascoigne, a gay young Templar, got himself disinherited for his dissolute courses, and spent his life under the pressure of debt, which he only partially relieved by marrying a widow in middle life. He was afterwards returned to Parliament for Midhurst, but, perhaps to frustrate the immunity from arrest which he would thus have obtained, was prevented from taking his seat by the machinations of his adversaries, who accused him, among other heinous offences, of being "a common rhymer." To avoid persecution he went abroad, served with distinction in the Low Countries, was taken prisoner, and returned with *dulce bellum inexpertis* on

his lips as the sum of his military experience. His services, it is likely, recommended him to the favour of Leicester, who employed him in writing and devising shows for the festivities at Kenilworth. Many of these are included in a volume entitled *The Princely Pleasures at the Court of Kenilworth,*



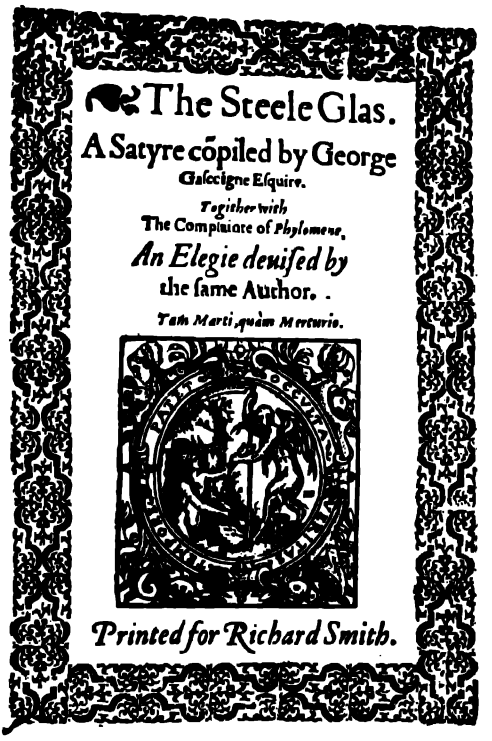
George Gascoigne presenting his Book to the Queen
British Museum Reg. MS. 18, *A* 48

published in 1576. His prose tale, *Hemetes the Hermit,* was recited before Queen Elizabeth, and translated by himself into three languages. Only the year before his death he produced his best known work, the satire entitled *The Steel Glass.* The title is derived from the notion that a mirror of steel reflects objects more faithfully than a mirror of glass, a doctrine most comfort-

able to English manufacturers, who at that period could make the former but not the latter. He died in October 1577.

Gascoigne was certainly not an *un*common rhymer, but he holds an important place in Elizabethan literature as a pioneer in many departments. "His *Supposes*, after Ariosto," says Mr. Sidney Lee, "is the earliest extant comedy in English prose; his *Jocasta*, after Euripides, is the second earliest tragedy in blank verse; his *Steel Glass* is probably the earliest regular verse satire; his *Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Verse* is the earliest English critical essay; his *Adventures of Ferdinando Jeronimi*, translated from Bandello, one of the earliest known Italian tales in English prose." If he had lived later and caught the contagion of enthusiasm from Campion and his contemporaries, he might have been a lyrical poet of distinction. There is an airy grace in the following stanzas, although the allegory somewhat halts, the poet having professed himself to be condemned by Craft and Falsehood, who should have no place in the Court of Beauty, and admitting the justice of his sentence after all:

Down then I fell upon my knee,
All flat before Dame Beauty's face,
And cried, "Good Lady, pardon me,
Which here appeal unto your grace.
You know, if I have been untrue,
It was in too much praising you.


The Steele Glas.
A Satyre cõpiled by George Gascoigne Esquire.
Together with
The Complaint of Phylomene.
An Elegie deuised by the same Author.
Tam Marti quàm Mercurio.
Printed for Richard Smith.

Title-page of "The Steel Glass," 1576

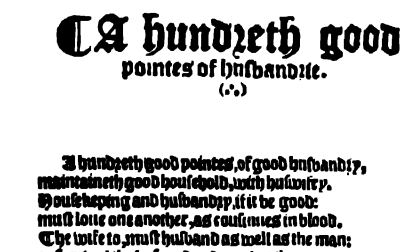
"And though this judge doth make such haste
To shed with shame my guiltless blood;
Yet let your pity first be placed
To save the man that meant you good.
So shall you show yourself a Queen,
And I may be your servant seen."

Quoth Beauty, "Well, because I guess
What thou dost mean henceforth to flee;
Although thy faults deserve no less
Than Justice here hath judgéd thee;
Wilt thou be bound to stint all strife,
And be true prisoner all thy life?"

"Yea, Madam," quoth I, "that I shall;
Lo Faith and Truth my sureties."

"Why, then," quoth she, "come when I call.
I ask no better warrantise."
Thus am I Beauty's bounden thrall,
At her command when she doth call.

The time for elegant imitations of the Georgics was not yet, but THOMAS TUSSER (1524?–1580), without intending it, produced a fair English approximation to the more ancient *Works and Days* of Hesiod. Having been a chorister at St. Paul's, he entered the service of Baron Paget of Baudesert as musician, married, set up as a farmer in Suffolk, failed, went back to music, and returned to farming, and after many vicissitudes died in a debtor's prison, being "more skilful in all than thriving in any vocation." He was, however, no charlatan; his simple and straightforward precepts derive from experience, and he well merits Southey's character of him as "a good, honest, homely, useful old rhymer." His *Hundred Good Points of Husbandry* (1557) were expanded in successive editions, until by 1573 they became five hundred, united to as many of "good housewifery." Their practical worth has always been admitted, and although there is nothing of poetry in them but the rhyme, their swing, terseness, and pithiness are literary qualities not always found in more pretentious performances.

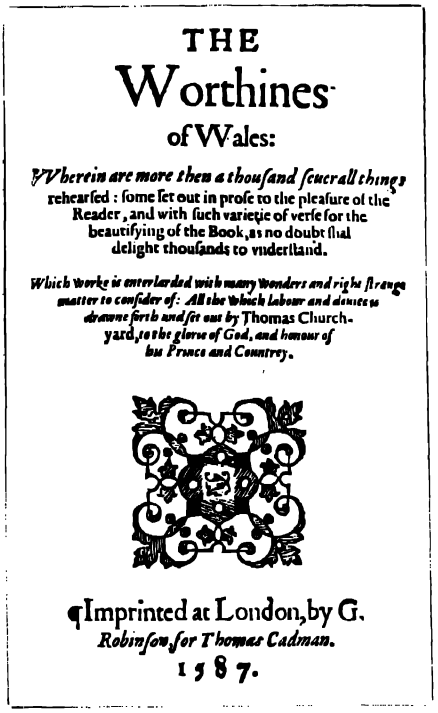

A hundreth good
pointes of husbandrie.
(&c.)

A hundreth good pointes, of good husbandry,
maintaineth good household, with housewifery.
Housekeping and husbandry, if it be good:
must loue one another, as cousines in blood.
The wife to, must husband as well as the man:
or farewell thy husbandry, doe what thou can.

Title-page of Tusser's "Hundred Good Points of Husbandry"

Tusser deserves mention from the peculiarity of his subject. Some writers of higher power but more conventional themes and methods would scarcely have merited notice if they had not faintly broken the too general pause of song which prevailed during the first years of Elizabeth. Perhaps the most remarkable, certainly the most voluminous, of these is THOMAS CHURCHYARD (1520?–1604), whose poems are chiefly important in so far as they illustrate contemporary transactions in Ireland and Flanders, and interesting in so far as they record incidents in his own adventurous life. A minstrel by profession, he is now and then a poet by chance. GEORGE TURBERVILLE (1540?–1610) was esteemed by his contemporaries as a writer on hawking, and as the translator of the *Eclogues* of Baptista Mantuanus, but is chiefly interesting now from his curious metrical descriptions of Russian manners and customs as observed by him during the mission of Thomas Randolph (1568–1569), to which he was secretary. The printed volume in which they were collected is lost, but three are preserved by Hakluyt.

Turberville was an accomplished gentleman, and is justly praised by a later writer for having "broken the ice for our quainter poets that now write." BARNABE GOOGE (1540–1594) made very popular translations of the *Zodiacus Vitæ* of Marcellus Palingenius and *The Reign of Antichrist* of Thomas Naogeorgus, and produced some original verse of no great merit. Nine books of the *Æneid* were rendered by THOMAS PHAER (1510–1560), and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by ARTHUR GOLDING (1535–1605 ?). It seems strange

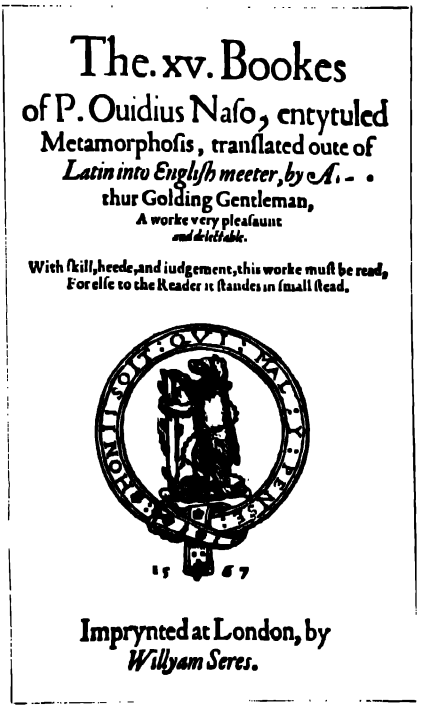

THE
Worthines
of Wales:

Wherein are more then a thousand seuerall things rehearsed: some set out in prose to the pleasure of the Reader, and with such varietie of verse for the beautifying of the Book, as no doubt shal delight thousands to vnderstand.

Which worke is enterlarded with many wonders and right strange matter to consider of: All the which labour and dewes is drawne forth and set out by Thomas Churchyard, *to the glorie of God, and honour of his Prince and Country.*

¶Imprinted at London, by G. *Robinson for Thomas Cadman.*
1587.

Title-page of Churchyard's "Worthiness of Wales." 1587


The. xv. Bookes
of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled
Metamorphosis, translated oute of
Latin into English meeter, by A. .
thur Golding Gentleman,
A worke very pleasaunt
and delectable.

With skill, heede, and iudgement, this worke must be read,
For else to the Reader it standes in small stead.

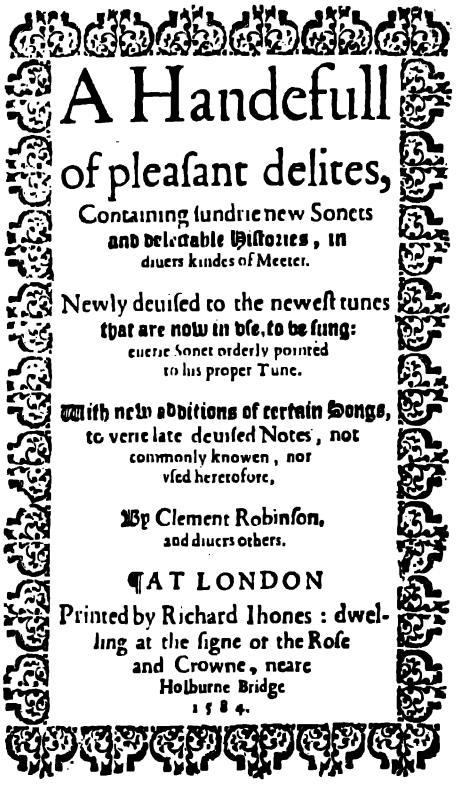
Imprynted at London, by
Willyam Seres.

Title-page of Golding's translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," 1567

that this piece of work, excellent for its time, should have proceeded from a Puritan and a translator of Calvin.

The year 1557, memorable poetically for the composition of the Induction to *A Mirror for Magistrates*, was also distinguished by the publication of the first asylum for English fugitive verse. *Tottel's Miscellany*, in emulation of the volumes in which Lodovico Dolce had long been enshrining the minor productions of the most clamorously vocal period of Italian poetry, gathered up, under the editorship of Nicholas Grimald, the waifs and strays of a poor era. Some aid, nevertheless, was lent by gleaning from the remains of Surrey and Wyatt. The next important anthology, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), indicates progress, but affords no token of the surprising development of lyrical poetry immediately at hand. This may be dated from 1584, when a superior anthology appeared under the editorship of CLEMENT ROBINSON,

and ground was broken in another direction by the songs imbedded in Lyly's plays, *Alexander and Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phaon*. Within four years more the silent bowers of the English Muses were resounding with melodious song. A more startling transition is not recorded in literary history than this almost unique instance of the lyrical inspiration occasionally vouchsafed to the individual being suddenly poured out upon a nation. No art, no study, no conjuncture of favourable circumstances could have brought it about; no "taking thought" could have added this cubit to the stature of English poetry.


A Handefull
of pleaſant delites,
Containing ſundrie new Sonets
and delectable Hiſtories, in
diuers kindes of Meeter.
Newly deuiſed to the neweſt tunes
that are now in vſe, to be ſung:
euerie Sonet orderly pointed
to his proper Tune.
With new additions of certain Songes,
to verie late deuiſed Notes, not
commonly knowen, nor
vſed heretofore,
By Clement Robinſon,
and diuers others.
AT LONDON
Printed by Richard Ihones: dwel-
ling at the ſigne of the Roſe
and Crowne, neare
Holburne Bridge
1584.

Title-page of Robinson's "Handefull of pleasant delites," 1584

The lyrists of the time may be divided into four classes: (1) Poetical artists, like Watson and Breton, who cultivate poetry systematically, and are sometimes lifted high above their ordinary selves; (2) Dramatists and novelists, like Lyly and Lodge, whose poetry is kept subordinate to their professional pursuits; (3) Men of the world, like Sir Edward Dyer, who occasionally find poetry an apter medium than prose to record visitations of serious thought; (4) Mere singers of tuneful snatches, a class not created but greatly fostered by the almost universal study of music as a branch of liberal education. The latter class will be best reserved for the period of James, when it attained its highest development. Before speaking of the others, we may pause for a moment upon almost the only lyrical composition of the interval between Surrey and Sidney which has obtained general popularity—the very beautiful *Renewing of Love* of RICHARD EDWARDS (1523?–1566), a professional musician and Court playwright, several of whose songs have reached us. It begins:

In going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,
I heard a wife sing to her child, that long before had wept.
She sighéd sore, and sung full sweet, to bring the babe to rest,
That would not cease, but criéd still, in sucking at her breast.
She was full weary of her watch, and grievéd with her child:
She rockéd it, and rated it, till that on her it smiled.
Then did she say, "Now have I found this proverb true to prove,
The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love."

Then took I paper, pen, and ink, this proverb for to write,
In register for to remain of such a worthy wight.
As she proceeded thus in song unto her little brat,
Much matter uttered she of weight in place where as she sat;
And provéd plain there was no beast, nor creature having life,
Could well be known to live in love without discord and strife.
Then kisséd she her little babe, and sware by God above,
The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love.

Of the writers who cultivated poetry as a profession, the oldest was the best. NICHOLAS BRETON will more properly be considered when we reach the Jacobean period, but of his early lyrics it may here be said that their excessive fluency injured his reputation; greatly admired by his contemporaries, they were soon almost entirely forgotten. Yet one lyric of most admirable pathos and truth to nature is attributed to Breton, although, appearing in an anthology which has contributions from other hands, it is not certainly from his pen:

SWEET LULLABY

Come, little babe, come, silly soul,
Thy father's shame, thy mother's grief,
Born as I doubt to all our dole,
And to thyself unhappy chief:
Sing lullaby, and lap it warm,
Poor soul that thinks no creature harm.

Thou little think'st and less dost know
The cause of this thy mother's moan;
Thou want'st the wit to wail her woe,
And I myself am all alone;
Why dost thou weep? why dost thou wail?
And know'st not yet what thou dost ail.

Come, little wretch—ah, silly heart!
Mine only joy, what can I more?
If there be any wrong they smart,
That may the destinies implore:
'Twas I, I say, against my will,
I wail the time, but be thou still.

And dost thou smile? O thy sweet face!
Would God himself He thee might see!
No doubt thou would'st soon purchase grace,
I know right well, for thee and me:
But come to mother, babe, and play,
For father false is fled away.

Sweet boy, if it be fortune's chance
Thy father home again to send,
If Death do strike me with his lance,
Yet may'st thou me to him commend:
If any ask thy mother's name,
Tell him by love she purchased blame.

Then will his gentle heart soon yield:
I know him of a noble mind:
Although a lion in the field,
A lamb in town thou shalt him find:

Ask blessing, babe, be not afraid ;
His sugared words have me betrayed.

Then may'st thou joy and be right glad ;
Although in woe I seem to moan,
Thy father is no rascal lad,
A noble youth of blood and bone :
His glancing looks, if he once smile,
Right honest women may beguile.



Title-page of Watson's "Hekatompathia"

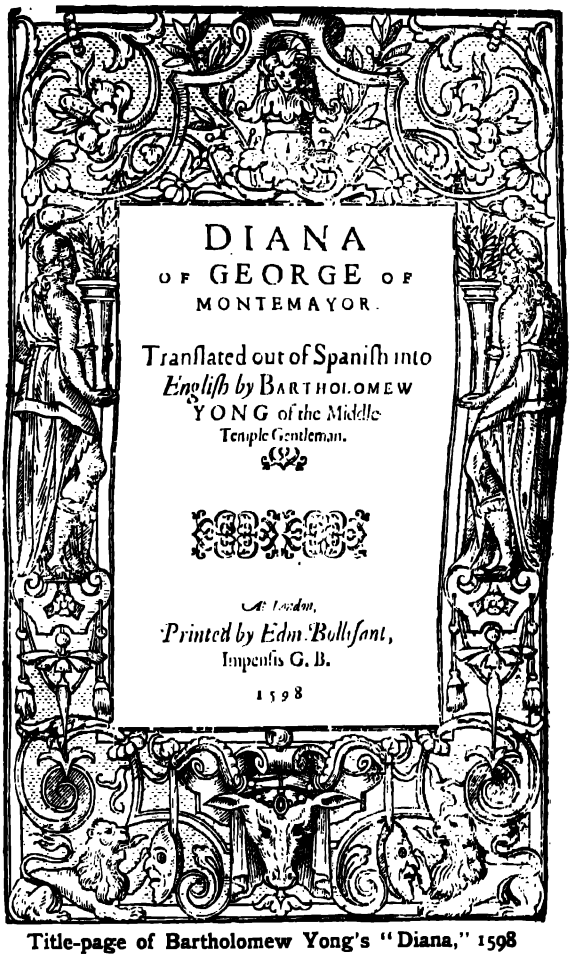
Come, little boy, and rock asleep ;
Sing lullaby and be thou still ;
I that can do nought else but weep,
Will sit by thee and wail my fill,
God bless my babe, and lullaby
From this thy father's quality.

If Breton was the author of this lyric he had a dramatic force and the insight into human nature which should have qualified him for greater achievements than he actually brought to pass, though several of his songs have true lyrical quality. The best of his prose performances is *Wit's Trenchmour*, an idyll of angling which is no unworthy precursor of Izaak Walton. THOMAS WATSON (1557?–1592) took his art more seriously than Breton, but had much less natural gift. His madrigals are poor; and the eighteen-line sonnet monstrosities of his *Hecatompathia* are chiefly interesting as elaborate contributions to those Elizabethan sonnet-cycles of which Sidney's *Astrophel*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are memorable examples. The question how far these cycles were artificial exercises and how far expressions of real feeling is one of great interest, but needs to be propounded again with each successive author. There is no reason to think that the sonnet meant much more to Watson than a literary exercise; a large proportion of his pieces are translations or imitations from the French or Italian. Translation into Latin verse was his forte, and this gift, rare among Englishmen of his time, was successfully exercised upon Tasso's *Aminta*. He was a gentleman-author, an amateur of music, and especially patronised by Walsingham, whose favour he had gained in Paris.

Although BARTHOLOMEW YONG is principally known as a translator of Italian and Spanish prose, he has a claim to a place among poets from

his twenty-four contributions to *England's Helicon* (1600), even though these are mostly translations. His best known work is his rendering of the *Diana of Montemayor*, which may have been seen in MS. by Shakespeare when he wrote *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

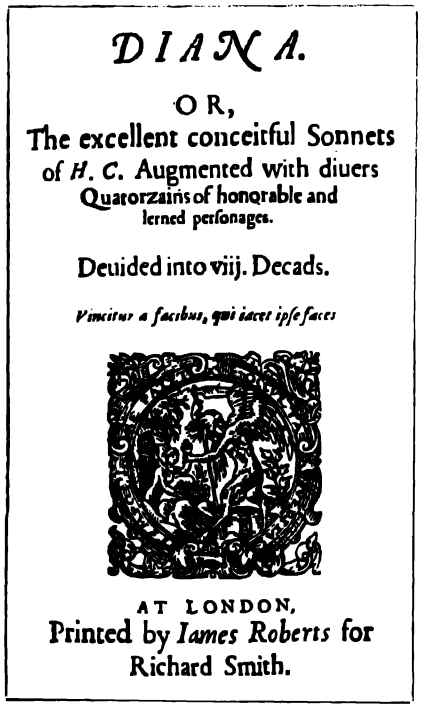
HENRY CONSTABLE (1562–1613), a man of good family, became a Roman Catholic early in life, and spent many years in Paris, where he played an ambiguous part as agent, perhaps spy, for Pope and Queen at the same time. In 1603 he was imprisoned in the Tower, but was liberated in the following year, and died at Liège in 1613. His *Diana*, a collection of sonnets, was published in 1592, and republished in 1594 with additional poems, not all of which are his. In 1600 he appears as a contributor of pastoral poems to the celebrated anthology, *England's Helicon*. These, though diffuse, evince genuine rustic feeling, and entitle him to a good position among the minor lyrists of his day. Nor are his sonnets devoid of merit. It must be set to the credit of a dubious character to have been the friend of Sidney in early youth, and to have celebrated the publication of Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* in a sonnet inspired by real emotion:



Title-page of Bartholomew Yong's "Diana," 1598

Give pardon, blessed soul, to my bold cries,
 If they, importune, interrupt thy song,
 Which now with joyful notes thou sing'st among
The angel choristers of the heavenly skies.
Give pardon, eke, sweet soul, to my slow cries,
 That, since I saw thee, now it is so long;
 And yet the tears that unto thee belong
To thee as yet they did not sacrifice.
I did not know that thou wert dead before,
 I did not feel the grief I did sustain;
The greater stroke astonisheth the more,
 Astonishment takes from us sense of pain.
I stood amazed when others' tears begun,
And now begin to weep when they have done.

Sonnet-cycles prevailed exceedingly from 1593 to 1596, during which period volumes of sonnets were published by poets of such repute as Chapman, Drayton, and Barnfield, and a number of minor minstrels, among whom BARNABE BARNES holds the first place. After this date the fashion ceased, though there is reason to think that the finest of Shakespeare's sonnets were yet to come. Perhaps the final blow was dealt by the publication in 1597 of three hundred and twenty-six spiritual sonnets at one fell swoop by HENRY LOK, who next year is found unsuccessfully suing for the appointment of keeper of the Queen's bears and mastiffs. Barnes (1569?–1609), a son of the Bishop of Durham, is a sonnetteer of real merit. He wrote two volumes of poetry, one spiritual, the other secular; and *The Devil's Charter*, a tragedy on the history of Pope Alexander VI. Some of his sonnets are almost modern in thought and expression:


DIANA.

OR,

The excellent conceitful Sonnets of *H. C.* Augmented with diuers Quatorzains of honorable and lerned personages.

Deuided into viij. Decads.

Vincitur a facibus, qui iacet ipse faces

AT LONDON,
Printed by *Iames Roberts* for Richard Smith.

Title-page of Constable's "Diana"

Ah! sweet Content, where is thy mild abode?
Is it with shepherds and light-hearted swains,
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content, where dost thou safely rest?
In heaven, with angels that the praises sing
Of Him who made, and rules at his behest,
The minds and hearts of every living thing?
Ah, sweet Content, where doth thine harbour hold?
Is it in churches with religious men
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?
Whether thou dost in earth or heaven appear,
Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbour here.

Much of Barnes's amorous poetry in his *Parthenophill* seems trembling on the verge of excellence, but seldom attains it. He is one of the few English poets who have essayed the difficult sestine stanza, which he has converted into a lyrical measure by making it octosyllabic.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL (1561?–1595) has obtained a higher place in English poetry than strictly his due, on account of the compassion excited by his fate. Belonging to a Roman Catholic family, he was sent to the Continent for his education, and returned to England ambitious for the crown of martyrdom, which, in the opinion of his co-religionists, he obtained by his execution for

treason in 1595. That he was guilty of treason is unquestionable; the fault, however, was not his, but that of Pope Pius V., who, by excommunicating and deposing Elizabeth, had rendered every Roman Catholic ecclesiastic an emissary of conspiracy and rebellion. Every such ecclesiastic was bound, by his allegiance to the Pope, to tell his flock that their Queen was an usurper—an Athaliah awaiting a Jehoiada. The conduct of the English Government was that prescribed by the circumstances, and exactly the same as that which any other Government would have adopted in its place. This in no respect impairs the honour due to Southwell for his single-minded enthusiasm, or for his courage and constancy. Apart from the man, the poet is interesting on two grounds —the rhetorical merit of much of his verse, and the first indications of the far-fetched metaphysical conceit which so marred the poetry of Donne and Crashaw and Cowley in the next century. He has, like these writers, great fertility of conception; ideas throng upon him, and he entertains and arrays all with indiscriminate hospitality. When writing simply and naturally he can be very pleasing, as in the following lines:



Robert Southwell

From the portrait in "St. Peter's Complaint," 1630

The loppéd tree in time may grow again;
 Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower;
The sorest wight may find release of pain;
 The driest soil suck in some moistening shower.
Times go by turns and chances change by course,
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

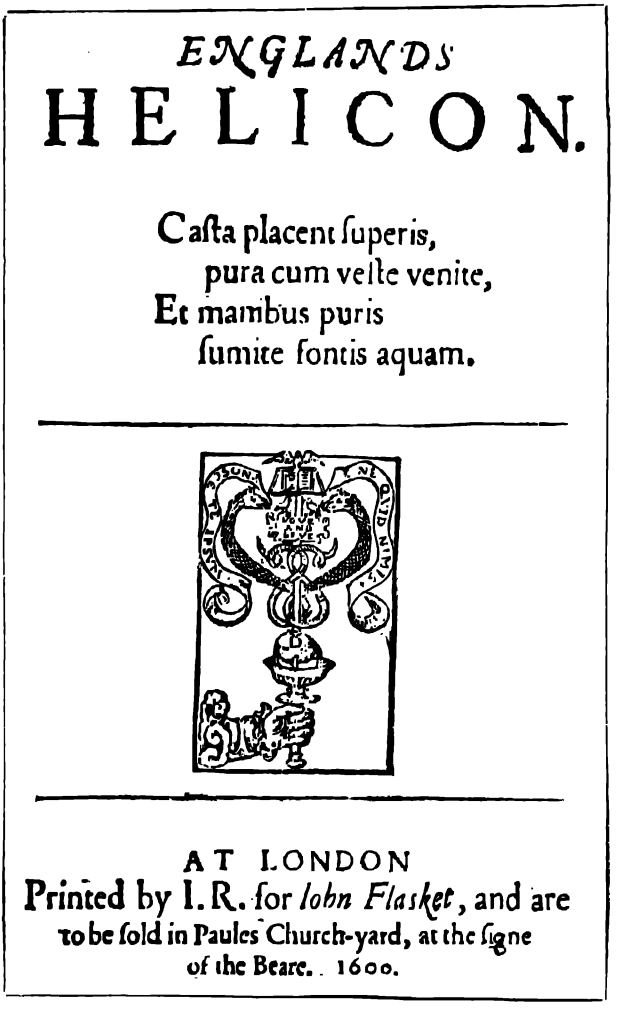
The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow;
 She draws her favours to the lowest ebb;
Her time hath equal times to come and go;
 Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web.
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

Not always fall of leaf nor ever spring,
 No endless night yet not eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
 The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise yet fear to fall.

Fortune has been most unkind to RICHARD BARNFIELD (1574–1627) in

depriving him for nearly three centuries of the honour due to his two best poems, but most kind in bestowing this on no less a person than Shakespeare. These are the beautiful lines on the song of the nightingale, beginning, "As it fell upon a day," and the sonnet to R. L., "If music and sweet poetry agree," both of which, being printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, were ascribed to Shakespeare, and only restored to Barnfield upon their discovery in a copy of his then almost unknown writings. The so-called ode is not very Shakespearean, but the authorship of the sonnet would hardly have been questioned upon internal evidence alone:

If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.


ENGLANDS
HELICON.

Caſta placent ſuperis,
pura cum veſte venite,
Et manibus puris
ſumite fontis aquam.

AT LONDON
Printed by I. R. for *Iohn Flaſket*, and are to be ſold in Paules Church-yard, at the ſigne of the Beare. 1600.

Title-page of "England's Helicon," 1600

Barnfield certainly did not encumber himself with poetical baggage for the ascent of Parnassus. The greater part of his slender store of verse was produced by the age of twenty, which may excuse a questionable morality which was probably nothing worse than boyish affectation. Here, as everywhere, he manifests pure poetical qualities, and it was a loss to English literature when, perhaps upon inheriting a patrimonial estate, he quitted the excellent literary

society he had enjoyed in London for his native Staffordshire, where he remained obstinately silent until his death in 1627.

The lives and general personal and literary characters of Lyly, Greene, and Lodge have been treated elsewhere, and in this place it is only necessary to speak of them as lyric poets. In our estimation, Lodge is the truest lyrist among them. The best lyrics of Lyly and Greene are not, strictly speaking, songs, but little poems, musical indeed, but whose length is rather conditioned by the subject than the melody. Lyly's famous song of Apelles on Campaspe is a notable instance. Rather than quote anything so universally known, we give the no less beautiful "Nightingale Song":

What bird so sings, yet so does wail?
O 'tis the ravished nightingale.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, teren! she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise,
Brave prick song! Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
How at heaven's gates she claps her wings!
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note!
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring.
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring.

Greene's verses are frequently steeped in the richest hues of poetry, but want something of the easy spontaneity of the lyric. They are rarely snatches of simple melody, but patterns of sonorous stateliness, such as might have passed for examples of an Elizabethan Keats. If they are to be regarded as songs, they are songs for the concert chamber:

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown.
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare;
Obscuréd life sets down a type of bliss:
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

As Greene reminds us of Keats, so Lodge sometimes reminds us of Blake. It is difficult to think that Blake had no knowledge of "Love's Wantonness" when he wrote "How sweet I roamed from field to field":

Love guards the roses of thy lips,
And flies about them like a bee;
If I approach he forward skips,
And if I kiss he stingeth me.

Love in thine eyes doth build his bower,
And sleeps within their pretty shrine,
And if I look the boy will hover,
And from their orbs shoot shafts divine.

Love works thy heart within his fire,
And in my tears doth form the same;
And if I tempt it will retire,
And of my plaints doth make a game.

Love, let me cull her choicest flowers,
And pity me, and calm her eye,
Make soft her heart, dissolve her lowers,
Then will I praise thy deity.

The same daring imagination is shown in the gorgeous "Description of Rosalynd," a rare example of continuous hyperbole never transgressing the limits allowable to impassioned feeling. The less-known "Hamadryad's Song" is an instance of the power of genuine lyrical emotion to exalt what without it would be mere commonplace:

Pluck the fruit and taste the pleasure,
Youthful Lordings, of delight!
While occasion gives you seizure,
Feed your fancies and your sight!
After death, when you are gone,
Joy and Pleasure is there none.

Here on earth no thing is stable;
Fortune's changes well are known.
While as Youth doth them enable,
Let your seeds of joy be sown.
After death, when you are gone,
Joy and Pleasure is there none.

Feast it freely with your lovers:
Blithe and wanton sweets do fade.
Whilst that lively Cupid hovers
Round about this lovely shade.
Sport it freely one to one,
After death is pleasure none.

Now the pleasant Spring allureth,
And both place and time invite.
Out! Alas! What heart endureth
To disclaim his sweet delight?
After death, when we are gone,
Joy and Pleasure is there none.

As already mentioned, another class of lyrical poets was formed by those men of society who occasionally turned aside from pleasure or business to the solace of poetry. After Raleigh, EDWARD DE VERE, Earl of Oxford (1550–1604), is the most perfect type of the poetical courtier. So great was his brilliancy as an ornament of Elizabeth's Court, and so strong his position as the son-in-law of Burghley, that nothing but his perverse wrong-headedness could have prevented his rising to the highest dignities of the State; but neither his

gallant bearing nor his accomplishments of mind and person could counterweigh the bad impression of his endless escapades and broils; he lost all consideration, and died in retirement. It is singular that much of the fugitive poetry which he contributed to the anthologies of the day should be of a religious character. As a lyrist he has considerable merit, and is commended as a dramatist, but his plays are lost. The best-known of his poems, and deservedly so, is his graceful colloquy with Fond Desire:

Come hither, shepherd's swain.
Sir, what do ye require?
I pray thee show to me thy name.
My name is Fond Desire.

Where wert thou born, Desire?
In pride and pomp of May.
By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot?
By Self-conceit, men say.

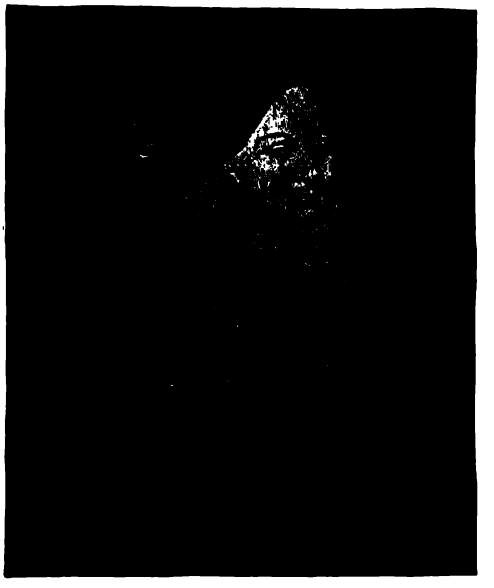
Tell me who was thy nurse?
Fresh youth, in sugared joy.
What was thy meat and daily food?
Sad sighs and great annoy.

What hadst thou then to drink?
Unfeignéd lovers' tears.
What cradle wert thou rockéd in?
In hope devoid of fears.

What lulled thee to thy sleep?
Sweet thoughts which liked one best.
And where is now thy dwelling-place?
In gentle hearts I rest.

What thing doth please thee most?
To gaze on beauty still.
Whom dost thou think to be thy foe?
Disdain of my good will.

Doth company displease?
It doth in many a one.
Where would Desire then choose to be?
He loves to muse alone.



Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford
From an engraving of the portrait at Welbeck

Will ever age or death
Bring thee unto decay?
No, no. Desire both lives and dies
A thousand times a day.

Then, Fond Desire, farewell,
Thou art no mate for me.
I should be loth methinks to dwell,
With such an one as thee.

Sir EDWARD DYER (*d.* 1607) was in so far the opposite of Oxford as to be a man of weight and character, and the friend, legatee, and pall-bearer of Philip Sidney, whom Oxford wished to assassinate. Like Oxford, however, he was subject to disastrous eclipses of the Royal favour, which he is said to have on one occasion regained by threatening to go into a consumption.

"And hereupon her majesty hath forgiven him." Like Oxford, also, he withdrew much from observation in the latter part of his life, and died in embarrassed circumstances, which may have been owing to his reported partiality to alchemy. He was an early friend of Spenser, a man of high culture, and the author of several poems, one which would have made him famous if his name had been more generally associated with it. It is hardly necessary to reproduce so well-known a poem as *My Mind to me a Kingdom is*, but one stanza may be quoted to point out the reflection of it in a still better known poem of Shirley's:

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
 Their wisdom by their rage of will;
Their treasure is their only trust;
 A cloakéd craft their store of skill.
But all the pleasure that I find
Is to maintain a quiet mind.

Shirley:

Some men with swords may reap the field,
 And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
 They tame but one another still.

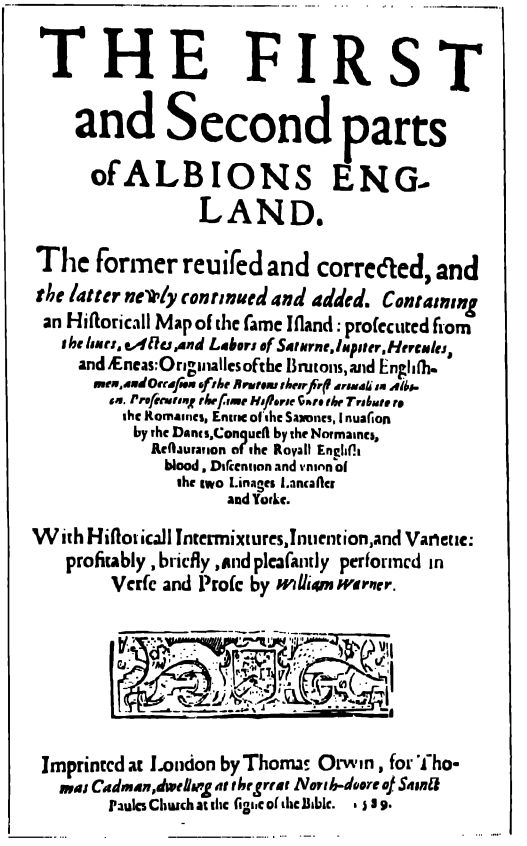
The attribution of a translation of six idylls of Theocritus to Dyer seems extremely uncertain.

Three poets of the time stand altogether aloof from the lyric—WILLIAM WARNER, ABRAHAM FRAUNCE, and THOMAS EDWARDS. Of these, Warner obtained much the highest reputation in his own day, being actually paralleled with Spenser. He was probably indebted for this unmerited distinction to the national character of his principal work, *Albion's England*, first published in 1586, and enlarged by successive continuations down to the author's own day. It may be compared in design to Ovid's *Fasti*, being a versified history of England, fabulous in many parts then deemed true, with an intermixture of unquestionable legend. Warner's significance in English literary history is derived less from his sensible and manly, but not very poetical epic, than from his peculiar position as the only considerable poet of his day who was entirely unaffected by Italian example, and wrote in lines of fourteen syllables as though Surrey, Wyatt, and their followers had never existed. The best parts of his poem are the episodes, one of which, *Argentile and Curan*, has been frequently republished and imitated. He was by profession an attorney, and died at Amwell in 1609.

Abraham Fraunce (1560?–1633?) is only remarkable for his persistence in the thankless task of composing in hexameters. Thomas Edwards (*fl.* 1595), not to be confounded with the author of *The Renewing of Love*, whose *Cephalus and Procris*, and *Narcissus*, have lately been retrieved from a unique copy, is a writer of a much higher order, who might have attained distinction if he had continued to write. At the date of his publication his command of language was evidently imperfect, and hence he is continually obscure, but not with the obscurity of affectation. We are continually tantalised

with glimpses of an almost Keatsian beauty, which never become definite. Nothing is known of Edwards's life; he seems to speak of himself as a poor scholar, and must have had some connection with the family of Argall, eminent notaries, to a member of which his volume is dedicated.

With the important exception of the Border Ballads, Scotch poetry, so flourishing at the beginning of the century, all but died away during its course. Many of the occasional pieces written under Mary Stuart and James VI. have considerable merit, but this merit is seldom or never of a poetical order. The poetical ballads and satires, for example, of ROBERT SEMPILL (1530 ?–1595) have both vigour and historical value, but can hardly be regarded as poetry. Apart from the curious play of "Philotus," the only regular poems of the time of any importance are those of ALEXANDER HUME (1560 ?–1609), minister of Logie, near Stirling, a son of Baron Polwarth. The chief characteristics of his poems, which have been recently collected, are a dignified stateliness of manner and a keen eye for the broader effects of natural scenery. The former is especially evinced in his *Triumph of the Lord*, a poem on the discomfiture of the Armada, the latter in his *Description of the Day Estivall*, too long even for the longest day, but a glowing representation of the pomp of summer:



THE FIRST
and Second parts
of ALBIONS ENG-
LAND.

The former reuiſed and corrected, and *the latter newly continued and added. Containing* an Hiſtoricall Map of the ſame Iſland: proſecuted from *the liues, Actes, and Labors of Saturne, Iupiter, Hercules,* and Æneas: Originalles of the Brutons, and Engliſh-*men, and Occaſion of the Brutons their firſt arriuall in Albi-on. Proſecuting the ſame Hiſtorie Vnto the Tribute to* the Romaines, Entrie of the Saxones, Inuaſion by the Danes, Conqueſt by the Normaines, Reſtauration of the Royall Engliſh blood, Diſcention and vnion of the two Linages Lancaſter and Yorke.

With Hiſtoricall Intermixtures, Intention, and Varietie: profitably, briefly, and pleaſantly performed in Verſe and Proſe by *William Warner.*

Imprinted at London by Thomas Orwin, for Tho-*mas Cadman, dwelling at the great North-doore of Saint* Paules Church at the ſigne of the Bible. 1589.

Title-page of Warner's "Albion's England," 1589

The ample heaven of fabric sure
In cleanness doth surpass
The crystal and the silver pure
Or clearest polished glass.

The time so tranquil is and still
That nowhere shall ye find,
Save in a high and barren hill,
An air of peeping wind.

All trees and simples, great and small,
That balmy leaf do bear,

Than they were painted on a wall.
No more they move or stir.

Calm is the deep and purple sea,
Yea, smoother than the sand,
The waves that weltering wont to be
Are stable like the land.

So silent is the cessile[1] air,
That every cry and call
The hills and dales and forest fair
Again repeat them all.

The principal cause of the poetical lethargy of Scotland was, no doubt, the absorption of the intellect of the nation in political and theological contests. The disquiet which prevailed on the Scotch and English border was of another sort, and encouraged poetry by the continued succession of picturesque and tragic incident. The great bulk of the Border Minstrelsy probably came into being during this century, although the precise date of any ballad can rarely be fixed, and almost all have undergone modification, not always for the worse, at the hands of successive generations of reciters and transcribers. They usually turn upon some contemporary incident impressive to the popular imagination. The majority are deeds of violence or treachery, provoking pity or indignation, which sometimes takes a sarcastic turn. Their dramatic force is frequently intense, and their artlessness has all the effect of the most consummate art. A much smaller class deal with the supernatural. Of these *The Demon Lover* is the finest, but is so well known that we pass it by for the eerie tale of *The Wife of Usher's Well*, all the more impressive from its fragmentary character. It has been used to complete the better known *Clerk of Oxenford*.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she,
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the careline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fishes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me
In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are long and mirk,

[1] Yielding.

The cârline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in any sheugh;[1]
But at the gates of Paradise
That birk grew fair enough.

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made them to a bed,
She's made it large and wide
And she's ta'en her mantle her about
Sat down at the bed-side.

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the grey;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna crawed but once,
And clapped his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa'."

"The cock doth craw, the day doth dawn,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be missed out of our place,
O sair pain we maun bide.

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre;
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire."

Poetry of this stamp is rare in the English ballad of the century, which exhibits hardly any imaginative power, and is mainly confined to versifying contemporary transactions such as the "winning of Cales" [Cadiz] and the adventures of Stukeley, or romantic incidents so generally credited as to have taken rank as popular tales, such as *The Blind Beggar's Daughter of Bednall Green*, *The Spanish Lady's Love*, and *The Merchant's Daughter of Bristol*. Sometimes the poet goes back to an ancient legend, as in the ballads on King Lear and Fair Rosamond; but almost the only instance of a purely fictitious tale is *King Cophetua*, where the peculiar form shows that the minstrel simply appropriated an old metrical romance. Tennyson's modern rendering has far more of the true ballad spirit. As a rule, the English balladist is more of a professional than his Scotch brother, and sets himself more systematically to besing his subject. He deals with its most obvious aspects in a matter of fact way, and has few of the Caledonian gleams of high imagination. Such a ballad as *The Lady Turned Serving-man* is mere rhymed prose, which irresistibly suggests the blind man and his dog. But

[1] Wood—*shaw*.

the singer has frequently a fine instinct for heroism, and can render full justice to such a theme as the sea-fight between Lord Howard and Sir Andrew Barton, the Scotch rover. Sir Andrew has beams attached to his maintop, which he lets fall upon the deck of the enemy, thus sinking the hostile vessel. Every Scot who has essayed to drop this contrivance has been shot by the English archer Horseley, and at last Sir Andrew comes forward himself in his armour of proof:

Sir Andrew he did swarve the tree,
With right good will he swarved then.
Upon his breast did Horseley hit,
But the arrow bounded back again.
Then Horseley spied a privy place
With a perfect eye in a secret part;
Under the spole of his right arm
He smote Sir Andrew to the heart.

"Fight on, my men," Sir Andrew says,
"A little I'm hurt, but yet not slain.
I'll but lie down and bleed a while,
And then I'll rise and fight again.
Fight on, my men," Sir Andrew says,
"And never flinch before the foe;
And stand fast by St. Andrew's cross
Until you hear my whistle blow."

They never heard his whistle blow—
Which made their hearts wax sore adread:
Then Horseley said, "Aboard, my lord,
For well I wot Sir Andrew's dead."
They boarded then his noble ship,
They boarded it with might and main;
Eighteen score Scots alive they found,
The rest were either maimed or slain.

This is historical; the incident occurred in 1511, and the "noble ship" became the second vessel in Henry VIII.'s navy. It is to be feared that there is not equal authority for the exploits, at the siege of Ghent, of the heroine of the spirited ballad, *Mary Ambree*, though they are probably not quite devoid of foundation:

She led up her soldiers in battle array
'Gainst three times their number at break of the day;
Seven hours in skirmish continuéd she:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

She filléd the skies with the smoke of her shot,
And her enemies' bodies with bullets so hot;
For one of her own men a score killéd she:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

And when her false gunner, to spoil her intent,
Away all her pellets and powder had sent,
Straight with her keen weapon she slashed him in three:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

It will be observed that *Mary Ambree* is written in anapæstic metre, which is also the case with a few of the ballads of the time. These are generally

or a humorous character, such as *The Miller of Mansfield*. Perhaps the only example of trisyllabic metre being adapted to a theme of tragic interest is the Scotch ballad of *The Bonnie Earl of Murray*, and there is scarcely an instance of its being employed for songs before the Restoration. Anapæsts and their congeners, however, peep occasionally into old ballads like *True Thomas*, and largely leaven merry strains, such as the ringing Bacchanalian carol, *Jolly Good Ale and Old*, profanely attributed to a bishop:

I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire.
No frost, nor snow, nor wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I wold;
I am so wrapped and thoroughly lapped
In jolly good ale and old.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek:
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl
Even as a maltworm shold,
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old."

If Bishop Still was the author, which is not likely, "Tib" must be a fair creation of the poet, for he was not married in 1566, the date of the primitive English comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, where the song first appeared, though it is believed to be still older.

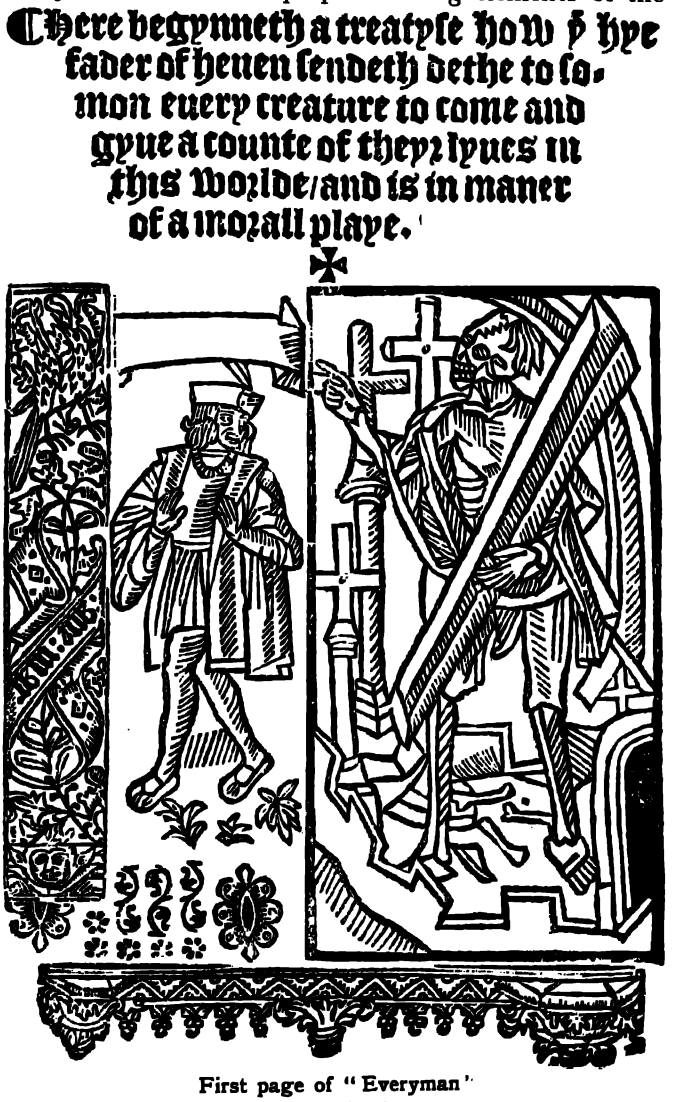
CHAPTER IV

THE PREDECESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE

We have now arrived at the threshold of the literary movement which has given the age of Elizabeth rank among the most important intellectual epochs of the world. Its drama, and its drama alone, has bestowed upon it a place in literature corresponding to that which it has earned in political history by its deliverance of Europe by the discomfiture of the Armada and in science by the method of Bacon and the discoveries of Gilbert and Harvey. Without its drama it would still have been a rich and glorious literary epoch for England, but no world-wide significance could have been attributed to it. Even without Shakespeare it would have vied not unsuccessfully with the dramatic literatures of France, Spain, and Germany, and attracted students and admirers from all those countries. With Shakespeare, it has obtained naturalisation in every civilised land, and more or less metamorphosed every national drama. Leaving theologians and philosophers and men of science out of the question, and confining our attention to letters, it may safely be affirmed that more has been written about Shakespeare than about all other European writers together between Dante and Goethe.

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of the Elizabethan drama than the extreme suddenness of its development. We seem to pass in an instant from an atmosphere of barbarism to an atmosphere of art. The transition was indeed abrupt, yet seemed more sudden than was really the case. It had been slowly prepared by a long succession of antecedent developments, according, by a rare felicity, with the development of the nation itself. It has already been described in a previous chapter on the Miracle Play how the origin of the English drama was, like that of the Greek, religious; how the growing taste for pomp and show in church services, partly arising from the language in which they were conducted having become unintelligible to the people, generated spectacular performances of a religious cast too elaborate and too much leavened with profane elements to be suitable for performance in church, thus laying the foundation of the modern theatre. The circumstance that these representations were given on holidays greatly favoured the mirthful element they had included from the first, and at the zenith of the miracle play its constituent elements included precursors alike of the more dignified tragedy and the more refined comedy of the coming age. Side by side with this entirely democratic form of drama existed another, the toy of the learned, but unknown to the people, the scholarly imitation of

Terence, written by professors and schoolmasters for representation by their pupils. On the Continent this form of drama flourished greatly during the later Middle Age; in England the evidences of its existence are few and far between, but it certainly did exist. The preponderating elements of the drama at the time when the drama began to assert for itself an existence independent of the miracle play were comic, and it might be expected that the English drama would begin with comedy. Before, however, this step could be taken, it had to pass through a transition stage—the morality, corresponding to the Spanish and Portuguese *auto*, in which, although Man and his subtle Enemy play their part, and celestial and infernal personages may be called upon to enrich the action and redress its balance, the characters are for the most part abstractions, personified Vices and Virtues. Perhaps the earliest example of the morality is *The Pride of Life*, written probably about 1400, and printed in Professor Brandl's *Quellen*. It is a very rude and imperfect production. *Mankind*, also edited by Professor Brandl, was certainly written under Edward IV. We have already referred to a more elaborate example in *The Castle of Perseverance*, where Man is represented as hesitating between his good and his evil angel, and standing a siege in a stronghold garrisoned by all the Virtues. It was remarked that this development of the miracle play or mystery was favourable to the dramatic



First page of "Everyman"
From the Britwell copy

art, rendering the poet more independent of conventionalities, and compelling him to rely mainly upon his own invention. It served as a stepping-stone for the Portuguese Gil Vicente, incomparably the greatest dramatic poet of the first half of the sixteenth century, to rise into the regions of purely secular comedy and farce, where, as well as in his moralities, more amusing than devout, he displayed the unflagging humour and the unflagging melody of Aristophanes. No English writer of moralities was an eminent poet like Gil Vicente, nor did any venture upon the decisive step he took; yet the productions of this transition period evince a decided advance in art over the old miracle play.



Title-page of "Hickscorner," 1510

The most important of the pure moralities, primitive drafts of the Spanish *autos*, which became popular in England towards the end of the fifteenth century, and form a transition from the miracle play to the interludes of Heywood, without, however, any approximation to the secular drama or any but a strictly moral and religious purpose, are *Everyman* and *Hickscorner*, the former of which has become well known from its recent revival and republication. The circumstance argues some literary merit, and, in fact, although nothing can be balder or less quotable than the diction of *Everyman*, it is a remarkable instance of dramatic effect obtained by simple adherence to an interesting action. "The subject of this piece," says Bishop Percy, "is the summoning of man out of the world by death; and its moral that nothing will then avail him but a well-spent life and the comforts of religion." After giving a brief analysis, Percy observes with justice: "It is remarkable that in this old simple drama the fable is conducted upon the strictest model of the Greek tragedy. The action is simply one, the time of action is that of the performance, the scene is never changed, nor the stage ever empty. Except in the circumstance of Everyman's expiring on the stage, the *Samson*

Agonistes of Milton is hardly formed on a severer plan." *Hickscorner* has greater variety and more of a comic cast. The personage from whom it takes its name is a ruffling blade who plays dire tricks with Imagination and Free Will, who are eventually set right by Perseverance and Contemplation. There is local colouring as well as humour in this description of a thief's profitable evening :

Sirs, he walked through Holborn,
Three hours after the sun was down,
And walked up towards Saint Giles in the Fields,
He hoved still, and there beheld ;
But there he could not speed of his prey,
And straight to Ludgate he took the way ;
Ye wot well, that 'potheraries walk very late,
He came to a door and privily spake
To a prentice for a penny-worth of euphorbium,
And also for a halfpenny-worth of alum plumb ;
This good servant served him shortly,
And said, is there aught else that you would buy ?
Then he asked for a mouthful of quick brimstone,[1]
And down into the cellar when the servant was gone,
Aside as he cast his eye,
A great bag of money did he spy;
Therein was a hundred pound :
He turned him to his feet, and yede his way round.
He was lodged in Newgate at the Swan,
And every man took him for a gentleman.

These pieces belong to the early part of the sixteenth century, as does the very curious play of *The Four Elements*, in which the discovery of America (called by this name) is said to have been made within the last twenty years. It might almost be considered a scientific drama, and is really valuable as an index to the popular physical science of the day, but ranks among moralities nevertheless. The only extant copy is mutilated, and breaks off just as Nature is admonishing Humanity :

Though it be for thee full necessary
For thy comfort sometime to satisfy
 Thy carnal appetite :
Yet it is not convenient for thee
To put therein thy felicity,
 And all thy whole delight.

The World and the Child is of the same date and character ; but *Lusty Juventus*, *New Custom*, *God's Promises*, and *The Trial of Treasure* are of considerably later date, being all composed in support of the Reformation, probably in the reign of Edward VI. *Lusty Juventus* begins with a pretty song :

In an arbour green asleep where I lay,
The birds sang sweet in the midst of the day ;
I dreamed fast of mirth and play :
 In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Methought I walked still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go ;

[1] Gunpowder. The peculiar system of measure is not to be taken too literally.

of *The Pardoner and the Frere*, were it not for sundry mediæval precedents. His other pieces, however, would suffice for his reputation as the initiator of the transition to real comedy. *The Four Ps*, turning upon an old jest, is very amusing; but the best, *The Play of the Weather* printed in 1533, is in conception quite Aristophanic, and all the more so from an apparent undercurrent of political allusion. Jupiter, in a discourse exceedingly like the preamble to one of Henry VIII.'s Acts of Parliament, announces that things have hitherto gone amiss in sundry important departments of the Cosmos, but that, with the assent and co-operation of his parliament, he is going to amend them:

Before our presence, in our high parliament,
Both gods and goddesses of all degrees
Hath late assembled, by common assent,
For the redress of certain enormities
Bred among them, thorow extremities
Abused in each to other of them all,
Namely, to purpose, in these most special:

Our foresaid father Saturn, and Phœbus,
Aeolus and Phoebe,[1] these four by name,
Whose natures, not only, so far contrarious,
But also of malice each other to defame,
Have long time abused, right far out of frame,
The due course of all their constellations,
To the great damage of all earthly nations.

Upon this being pointed out to them, the delinquents have voluntarily surrendered their offices to Jupiter, just as if they were abbots, and their prerogatives monasteries; although the date of publication shows that this was not the special object of the poet's satire:

They have, in conclusion, wholly surrendered
Into our hands, as much as concerning
All manner weathers by them engendered,
The full of their powers, for term everlasting,
To set such order as standeth with our pleasing,
Which thing, as of our part, no part required,
But of all their parties right humbly desired.

The hobbling versification of the old poet must not obscure the humour of his conception, which is enhanced when Jupiter, looking about for a herald, pitches upon Merry Report, who excels in the art of putting things:

To a certain widow this day was I sent,
Whose husband departed without her witting,
A special good lover and she his own sweeting,
To whom, at my coming, I cast such a figure,
Mingling the matter according to my nature,
That when we departed, above all other things,
She thanked me heartily for my merry tidings.

Proclamation is accordingly made, and every man is found suing for a

[1] The dispensers respectively, Mr. Pollard points out, of frost, sunshine, wind, and rain.

different kind of weather to serve his own occasions, the climax being reached by an urchin who would like snow in summer:

> Forsooth, sir, my mind is this, at few words,
> All my pleasure is in catching of birds,
> And making of snowballs and throwing the same:
> For the which purpose to have set in frame,[1]
> With my godfather god I would fain have spoken,
> Desiring him to have sent me by some token
> Where I might have had great frost for my pitfalls,
> And plenty of snow to make my snowballs.
> This once had, boys' lives be such as no man leads.
> Oh, to see my snowballs light on my fellows' heads,
> And to hear the birds how they flicker their wings
> In the pitfall! I say it passeth all things.
> Sir, if ye be god's servant, or his kinsman,
> I pray you help me in this if you can.

Jupiter announces his intention of distributing the weather as he may think fit; the petitioners thank him effusively, as though they had obtained some enormous concession, and Merry Report sums up:

> Lo! how this is brought to pass!
> Sirs, now shall ye have the weather even as it was.

"There can be no doubt," Dr. Ward justly observes, "that so soon as the interludes of John Heywood, and compositions more or less resembling these in kind, had established themselves in popular favour as an accepted dramatic species, the required transition from the moralities to comedy had, to all intents and purposes, been effected." There was, nevertheless, no piece in existence that could claim the title of a comedy. The first example of a play with a regular comic intrigue, worked out by personages discriminated to the best of the author's ability, and divided into acts and scenes, was given by NICHOLAS UDALL in *Ralph Roister Doister*, and constitutes a landmark in our literature, even though the play be bad and the author not much better. It would be most interesting to be able to date it with precision. It was formerly thought to have been written for Eton boys while Udall was headmaster, between 1534 and 1541, but Professor Hales has almost overthrown this opinion. Udall's apparent indebtedness to Heywood's *Proverbs*, published in 1546, may be explained by supposing both writers to have used the same current popular expressions: but when it appears that there is no allusion to *Ralph Roister Doister* in the first and second editions of Thomas Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, published in 1551 and 1552, but that it is quoted in the edition of 1553, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was first performed in one of the two latter years, when Udall had become, or was on the point of becoming, master of Westminster.

Whenever first produced, *Ralph Roister Doister's* freedom from indecency renders it almost certain that it was written to be acted by boys, and the author was unquestionably a schoolmaster. Udall, born in 1505 or 1506, had distinguished himself at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he is said

[1] Made arrangements.

to have incurred disfavour by his attachment to the doctrines of the Reformers. Any loss he may have suffered on this account was amply made up to him when, in 1534, he was appointed master of Eton School. He forfeited his position in 1541 from pecuniary irregularities and yet more serious imputations, which may have been disproved, since he was paid his salary to the time of his removal and was allowed to retain his living of Braintree. It is a point in his favour that his troubles coincided with a strong reaction towards Roman Catholicism, following the execution of Cromwell. After a while, Queen Katherine Parr, a supporter of the Reformation, noticed him, and he assisted in translating Erasmus's paraphrase of the Gospels. He did much literary and other work for the Government under Edward VI., but upon the accession of Mary deserted the Reformation with the alacrity of a Vicar of Bray. Bishop Gardiner, undismayed by past scandals, made him his own household schoolmaster, and on the strength, as may be supposed, of *Ralph Roister Doister*, he received a commission to prepare interludes to be acted at Court. In or about 1554 he was made headmaster of Westminster School, which Henry VIII. had founded in 1540. This appointment he lost when, in 1556, Mary delivered the school to the re-established monastery of Westminster, and Udall died almost immediately afterwards. He had written a drama on the story of King Hezekiah, extant and acted in Elizabeth's time, and several comedies, now lost.

Neither Udall nor his play would have attracted much attention if they had not come at the head of English comic poets and comic pieces. If *Ralph Roister Doister* could have had any literary distinction it would have been as a clever adaptation of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus; but, in fact, it is a feeble one. One merit it certainly possesses—the easy and natural progress of the scenes; and it may be granted that it is one of those plays which would act better than they read. Much mirth might, no doubt, be derived from the actors' facial expressions and by-play; and a play acted by boys may generally count upon indulgence.

Passing over *Jacob and Esau*, *Queen Hester*, and other pieces not unworthy of notice, but belonging to the class of interludes, we find the rank of the second English comedy disputable rather than disputed between *Misogonus* and the far better known *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. There is nothing in common between the two plays, the former of which a regular comedy on the classical model, with a grave didactic purpose; the other, if it had not been lengthened out to the dimensions of a comedy, would have been ranked with farces. Neither possesses much literary merit, but the less ambitious is the more interesting; for *Misogonus* has no root in the national life, while *Gammer Gurton's Needle* really is a leaf from "the short and simple annals of the poor." Many types of character are presented with vivid truth, from the mischief-making half-witted vagrant down to the domestic cat, whose misdeed is the pivot of the action. We learn exactly how an English peasant husband of Elizabeth's time would express himself when put out:

> Whereto served your hands and eyes, but this your neele to keep?
> What devil had you else to do? ye kept, ich wot, no sheep.

Cham fain abroad to dig and delve, in water, mire, and clay,
Sossing and possing in the dirt still from day to day.
A hundred things that be abroad, cham yet to see them wele,
And four of you sit idle at home, and cannot keep a neele!

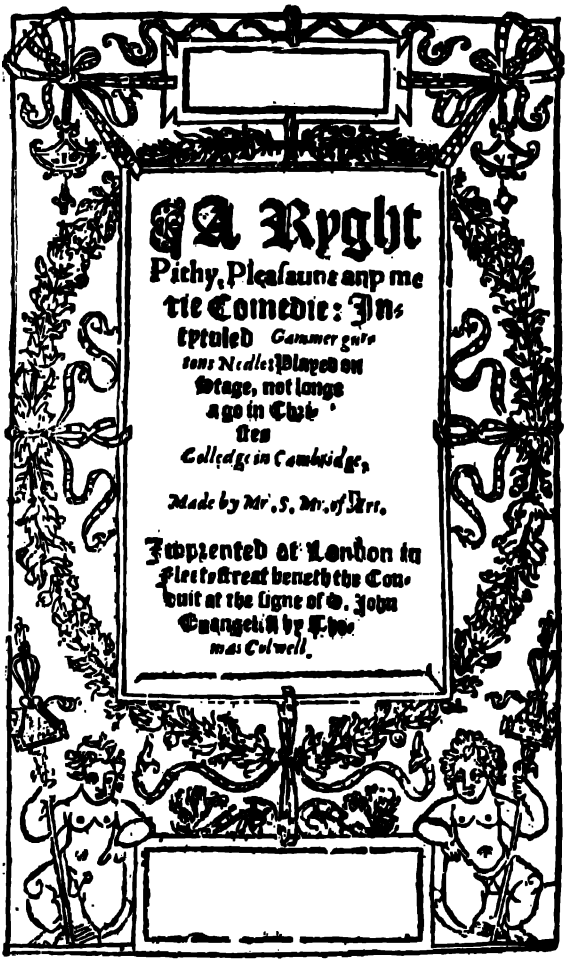
The decriers of machinery may be invited to consider the commotion produced in the days of Elizabeth by the loss of one poor needle, the idea that another might be producible from the family stores, or obtainable on loan from a neighbour, never occurring to anybody, even though the integrity of Hodge's breeches is at stake. Gammer Gurton's directions to the serving-boy how to find the family candle cast interesting light on another department of domestic economy:

Go, hie thee soon,
And grope behind the old brass pan, which thing when thou hast done,
There shalt thou find an old shoe, wherein if thou look well,
Thee shalt find lying an inch of an old tallow candel,
Light it, and bring it tite away.

It is not surprising that Gammer has to exclaim:

Our candle is at an end, my neele is still where it was.

The needle, originally dropped by Gammer in her indignation at the lawless proceedings of Gib the cat, is, of course, eventually recovered.



Title-page of "Gammer Gurton's Needle," 1575

Most of the piece is in a West-country dialect, although it was written and acted at Cambridge. If we are to infer, as seems reasonable, that West-country was the speech accepted as appropriate to rustics, this seems to imply a number of such comedies now lost.

The question of priority between *Gammer Gurton* and *Misogonus* must be decided in favour of the former if Mr. Henry Bradley is right, as he probably is, in identifying this production of Mr. S., Master of Arts, as the title-page describes the author, with "Mr. Stevenson's plaie," acted in 1559. The date of *Misogonus* is fixed by internal evidence at 1560. Stevenson appears

to have produced a college play as early as 1553–1554, which may have been *Gammer Gurton*. On the other hand, the Marprelate tracts state that it was generally attributed to Dean, afterwards Bishop, Bridges; and this the writer evidently does not disbelieve, though he affects to consider the Dean incapable of writing any so clever. The ascription to Bishop Still seems refuted by the gravity of that exemplary prelate.

Before proceeding to an unquestionable tragedy in Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*, brief reference should be made to a class of composition intermediate between the morality and tragedy, as Heywood's interludes form a transition between morality and comedy. The distinguishing mark of such pieces is that while the action and the leading characters are historical, many of the personages are allegorical figures of vices and virtues, or even classes of society, and the "Vice" of the morality reappears, though he may not bear the name. In *Appius and Virginia* he is called "Haphazard"; in *Cambyses*, "Ambidexter." These two plays were probably written shortly after *Gorboduc*. An older member of the class, Bishop Bale's *King John*, dates from the reign of Edward VI. It is very remarkable as a panegyric of John, of whom so little good has been said, as the representative of English liberties against the encroachments of Rome. Shakespeare took somewhat of a similar line, though he refrained from representing John as the Proto-martyr of the Reformation:

> Upon a good zeal he attempted very far
> For wealth of this realm to provide reformation
> In the Church thereof, but they did him debar
> Of that good purpose; for by excommunication
> The space of seven years they interdict this nation.
> These bloodsuppers thus of cruelty and spite
> Subdued this good King for executing right.

"Nature formed the Poet for the King!"

Whenever written or first represented, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was acted at Cambridge in 1563. Two years earlier an epoch had been created in English dramatic history by the performance at the Temple of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy, the joint composition of Thomas Sackville, of whom an account has already been given, and THOMAS NORTON (1532–1554), like Sackville a man versed in public affairs, and afterwards painfully notorious for his severity in the prosecution of Roman Catholics. It must be remembered that he was the son-in-law of Archbishop Cranmer, who had been treated with even greater severity. Warton, whose opinions on matters of taste deserve the utmost respect, attributes the entire play to Sackville, from the prevailing similarity of style. It appears to us, however, that, granting Norton any poetical gift at all, which it would be hard to deny him merely because in versifying the Psalms he failed where no one has succeeded, the resemblance in manner is sufficiently accounted for by the resemblance in poetical form, now the rule in English tragedies, then a daring novelty. *Gorboduc* is not only the first regular English tragedy, but the second important essay in English blank verse after Surrey's specimens of the *Æneid*. The trick once learned, it was not difficult for accomplished

men to write with uniformity of style upon a stately and somewhat monotonous pattern. Their innovation was of momentous importance, providing the dignified drama, whether tragedy or comedy, at once and for ever with the style that best befitted it. In truth, but for blank verse, the English stage would never have possessed a poetical drama.

It will further be observed that *Gorboduc* is, in fact, two plays, and that the first three acts are but a prologue to the others. These latter are the portion of the play attributed to Sackville, who could not find time or mood to finish his own *Mirror for Magistrates*, and may well have devolved the less interesting



Knole Park, built by Sackville
From a picture by Paul Sandby

part of his tragedy upon an associate. The story, like *Lear*, is taken from the fabulous annals of Trojan Britain, and is another version of the same idea. As Lear between his daughters, Gorboduc divides his realm between his sons Ferrex and Porrex. Each aspires to the sole sovereignty. A civil war ensues. Porrex kills Ferrex, and is himself slain by his mother Videna. The exasperated people slay Videna and Gorboduc himself. The line of Brutus thus becoming extinct, the country falls into fearful anarchy between the insurgents, the nobles, and a Scotch invader. The curtain falls upon a scene of utter confusion, inconsistent with the precepts of the dramatic art, but conformable to what was then believed to be history. It actually is related that the extinction of the royal line was followed by an anarchy of fifty years, terminated

at last by Dunwallon, Prince of Cornwall, who founded a new dynasty. It is of more importance that this conclusion, so unsatisfactory from the point of view of dramatic art, is needful for the serious purpose of the play. *Gorboduc* cannot be understood unless it is recognised that it was composed with a direct political object. It is the work of two statesmen, who felt, as all statesmen must, the danger to which the realm was exposed throughout Elizabeth's reign by the precariousness of the succession. The object of the piece is to persuade the Queen to marry, and the poet's end is gained by a powerful delineation of the universal misery consequent upon the absence of legitimate heirs. Nothing can be clearer than the drift of the speech of the wise counsellor Eubulus near the end:

> And this [civil discord] doth grow, when lo! unto the prince
> Whom death or sudden hap of life bereaves,
> No certain heir remains: such certain heir
> As not all only is the rightful heir,
> But to the realm is surely known to be,
> And truth thereby vested in subjects' hearts
> To owe faith there, where right is known to rest.
> Alas, in parliament what hope can be,
> When is of parliament no hope at all?
> Which though it be assembled by consent,
> Yet is not likely with consent to end.

The moral is further enforced by the production of a Scotch prince, Fergus, Duke of Albany, as claimant of the crown and invader of the kingdom, a clear allusion to the danger of the succession of Mary Stuart. There is also a plain hint that the Queen will do well to choose an English consort.

The above lines are a fair sample of the diction of the play, rather adapted to command respect than admiration. One passage, however, describing the death of Porrex, murdered by his mother, attains the elevation of true poetry:

> His eyes, even now unclosed,
> Beheld the queen, and cried to her for help.
> We then, alas! the ladies which that time
> Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed,
> And hearing him oft call the wretched name
> Of mother, and to cry to her for aid,
> Whose direful hand gave him the mortal wound,
> Pitying, alas! for nought else could we do,
> His ruthful end, ran to the woeful bed,
> Despoiléd straight his breast, and, all we might,
> Wipéd in vain with napkins next at hand,
> The sudden streams of blood that flushéd far
> Out of the gaping wound. O what a look,
> O what a rueful steadfast eye, methought,
> He fixed upon my face, which to my death
> Will never part from me, when with a braid[1]
> A deep-fetched sigh he gave, and therewithal,
> Clasping his hands, to heaven he cast his sight;
> And straight, pale death pressing within his face,
> The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.

[1] Start.

The relation of the death by a messenger is in the manner of Seneca, to whom, as well as to the Italian tragic writers, also imitators of Seneca, the authors are much indebted. On the other hand, the unities are set at defiance. The use of blank verse was probably suggested by Italian precedent. Classical influence is manifested by the Chorus, which sums up and moralises upon the situation at the end of every act. Native talent excogitated the Dumb Show, preceding each act and prefiguring its character; thus, a representation of the fable of the Bundle of Sticks ushers in the inculcation of political unity, and the Furies are called into requisition when murder has to be done.

Cambyses and *Appius and Virginia*, tragedies of about the period of *Gorboduc*, have already been mentioned as remarkable for their carrying over the "Vice" of the moralities to serious tragedy. As specimens of the dramatic art they are extremely rude and primitive. *Tancred and Gismundo*, though dealing outrageously in horrors, is less in "Cambyses' vein," and was refurbished for representation in 1591. It was the work of five authors, and is perhaps the first English play taken from an Italian novel. *Damon and Pythias*, by RICHARD EDWARDS (1523?–1566), is of considerable interest as the first tragi-comedy, the situation being one of tragic suspense until the happy *dénouement* of the return of Pythias. If it had but been in blank verse instead of fourteen-syllable couplets, and if some good genius had frequently whispered to Edwards that he was getting tedious, *Damon and Pythias* might have been a good play. The writer has excellent ideas and sound dramatic instincts, but lacks strength to emancipate himself from the conventions of his age, which are most anti-dramatic. In one respect he deserves much credit, his happy invention of a pair of false friends, a philosopher, and a courtier, to heighten the true friendship of Damon and Pythias by the irony of contrast. Edwards would have been a good comic poet with a more liberal endowment of *vis comica*. He was an Oxford M.A., a student of music, and master of the children at the Chapel Royal. A later tragi-comedy or comedy of his on the story of Palamon and Arcite, now lost, gave great contentment to Queen Elizabeth.

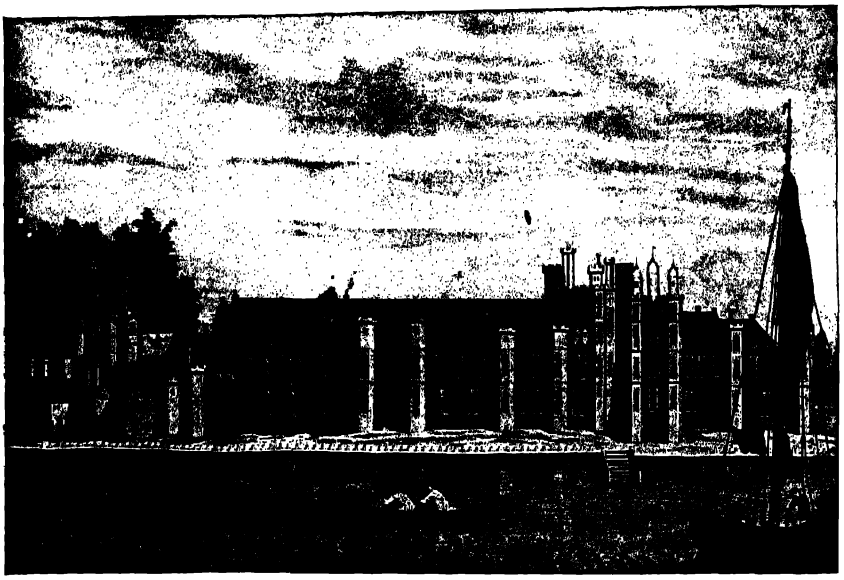
Edwards was a Court poet, and the first dramatists who succeeded in achieving a really literary drama, Lyly and Peele, were, in their first efforts at least, Court poets also. Many plays, both by Court poets for the entertainment of the Queen and the aristocracy, and by humbler pens for the amusement of the public, doubtless filled up the gap of sixteen or seventeen years, but in general their titles alone survive as tokens of the existence of an active literary industry. We know, for example, that a play founded on Montemayor's romance of *Diana Enamorada* was performed before Elizabeth in 1584, and may have suggested *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, but not a syllable of it is preserved. Almost the only dramatic author of the period who has bequeathed both his name and his work to posterity is George Whetstone, the translator of Cinthio, who in 1578 printed *Promos and Cassandra*, a rhyming play of formidable extent, too long and heavy to be acted, but interesting for having afforded the plot of *Measure for Measure*. Nor should the dramatic translations and imitations of George Gascoigne be overlooked; his *Supposes*, after Ariosto,

is the earliest extant comedy in English prose; and his *Jocasta*, adapted from Euripides through the medium of an Italian imitation, is the second English tragedy in blank verse.

Being now arrived at the period of CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, who first gave the English drama rank among the great dramatic literatures of the world, a short space may be advantageously devoted to the inquiry how Melpomene and Thalia were housed, and what were the accessories of theatrical representation.

The Theatres

We have seen that the Miracle Play was performed upon huge movable stages, drawn or pushed along upon wheels from one part of the town where



Greenwich Palace in the Sixteenth Century

From an engraving by Basire in "Vetusta Monumenta," 1767

the performance took place to another, the audience standing below in the open air. This may have answered sufficiently well so long as performances took place only once a year, but was evidently inconsistent with daily representation. Instead of bringing the theatre to the audience it had become necessary to bring the audience to the theatre, but the erection of play-houses, however plainly demanded by the needs of the situation, was long delayed by want of capital and by the opposition of the municipal authorities, who not merely contemned and suspected players as loose characters but dreaded all concourses of people as the means of generating and diffusing contagious disorders. For some time performances were chiefly given in the yards of large inns, to which the actors who gave representations at Court or in the mansions of the great, naturally resorted at the times when their services were not required by their patrons. It was not until 1576 or 1577 that a theatre, called *The* Theatre, because at the time it was the only one, was erected in

Finsbury Fields, followed shortly afterwards by the Curtain, in Shoreditch. The Rose, the Swan, the Globe succeeded, all built on the Bankside, Southwark, on the south side of the Thames. The pencil of Johannes De Witt, a Dutch visitor to London in 1596, has happily preserved for us the semblance of the Swan Theatre, erected probably in 1593, and according to De Witt much the finest theatre in London at the time of his visit. It could hold, he assures us, three thousand spectators, and was the only theatre in London built of stone. The general aspect of the edifice will be apparent from the accompanying reproduction of the original drawing, brought to light by Dr. Gaedertz, and now preserved in Utrecht. The shape is oval, and if the stage and its appendages of dressing-rooms were really entirely surrounded by boxes, the performance must have been invisible to a considerable part of the house. There is no appearance of a seated pit, but chairs and benches were probably brought in when required; and the stage may have been movable, to allow of the exhibition of bull- and bear-baiting. The spectators, it will be observed, are protected from the weather by a tiled roof, but the performers have no shelter; and the want of covering must have increased the difficulty of effective declamation. De Witt unfortunately tells us nothing respecting the equipment of the actors, or mentions the name of the piece they are representing. The theatre had evidently excited his admiration; it was built, he says, of flints, supported on wooden pillars painted in imitation of marble. He was induced to depict it by its general resemblance to a Roman amphitheatre.



The Interior of the "Swan Theatre"

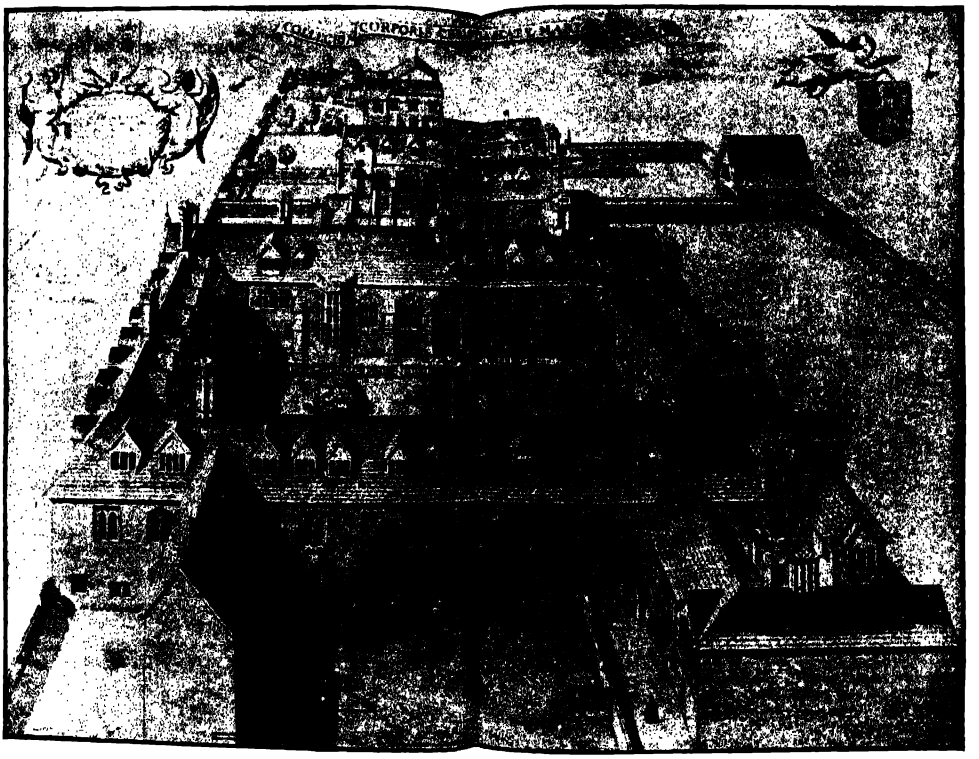
From a sketch made by J. de Witt in 1596, now in the University Library at Utrecht

Next to the edifices, the performers and the audiences must be taken into account. Though a popular, the English theatre was not originally a democratic institution. The phrase, even now surviving, "His Majesty's

Servants," reminds us how greatly indebted it was in its early days to the patronage of the Crown, and the aristocracy followed the example of the Queen. We read of the troops of actors maintained by great nobles like Leicester and Pembroke, the former of whom obtained a special licence for his troop in 1573. Municipal authorities were empowered to grant or refuse licences at their discretion. The Queen's own players passed as the Lord Chamberlain's. The partiality of the Crown for dramatic entertainments involved the encouragement of acting in the provinces, as plays were given for the Queen's amusement in all her numerous progresses, and it was necessary to have actors at hand at least in sufficient numbers to tutor unskilled performers. The disadvantages of attempting performances with a mere scratch company are, as all know, exhibited to the life in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* This countenance from the Court enabled the stage to hold its ground against the hostility of serious men and fathers of families, who in protecting the community from physical and moral contagion ran great risk of suppressing Shakespeare. The general body of the people, neither courtiers nor councillors, were no doubt favourable to the drama. Whatever credit may be due to the tradition of Shakespeare having at one time gained his livelihood by holding horses at the theatre-door, it evinces that the theatre was frequented by people who could afford to ride to it, while, on the other hand, passages from contemporary satirists establish that such people might be jostled by unsavoury folk in working dresses. Two of the principal attractions of the stage in our day were then lacking—there were no actresses, women's parts being performed by boys, and there was no scenery. The absence of regular scene-painting may have been partly supplied by theatrical properties, as inventories mention tombs, beacons, steeples, and the mouth of hell itself.

Hamlet's directions to the players afford some insight into the intellectual status of the average performers of Shakespeare's day, which Shakespeare does not seem to have rated very highly. Hamlet appears to feel himself dealing with men of some natural aptitude, but devoid of culture and urbanity. Little else could be expected from the low social estimation in which the profession was then held and the conditions under which it was recruited. Leaving Shakespeare's own relation to it for further consideration, it may be said that almost the only actor likely to have had a superior education was Edward Alleyn, whose father, though by no means of high station, was apparently well-off. Tarlton and Knill had been tavern-keepers or connected with taverns; the elder Burbage had been a joiner; of Heminge and Condell we have no information. The want of actresses tended to stock the stage with good-looking boys, who might or might not have a real vocation. Recognition, nevertheless, could not be denied to pre-eminent ability. Scholars declared that Roscius lived again in Alleyn; and the appreciation of the mob kept Tarlton, the genius of low comedy, on sign-boards till the end of the eighteenth century. As a rule, however, the actor's calling was contemned by men of refinement, a circumstance with an important bearing on literary history, as it went near to wreck the drama altogether. When Sidney wrote his *Apology for Poetry* in reply

to the railings of Stephen Gosson, he took a grand and a right line as regarded the general cause of Poetry herself, but he erred with respect to the drama. Disgusted with the low standard of the stage at the time he wrote, alike as concerned the quality of the pieces, the quality of the performers, and the accompaniments of the drama in general, he misconceived these temporary and accidental defects as the inevitable adjuncts of a false system, and would, as he thought, have effected a radical cure by prescribing a return to the model of the classic stage, unities and all. Had this view prevailed, we should never have possessed a national drama. Little as Sidney could imagine it,



Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

From Loggan's "Cantabrigia Illustrata," 1688

he was writing on the brink of a revolution, initiated by several men of genius who were writing nearly at the same time as himself, and especially by one whose first play, it is probable, appeared in the year after he had yielded up his breath at Zutphen. The special importance of CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE as a regenerator of the English drama induces us to name him first, though with some slight dislocation of chronology.

Christopher Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker, was born at Canterbury in February 1564, two months before Shakespeare. He was educated at the Canterbury grammar school, and afterwards at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to which he was probably elected on a foundation of Archbishop Parker's. He

probably made his translation of Ovid's *Amores* while at college, and proceeded to London upon taking his B.A. degree in 1583, since his *Tamburlaine*, which could not have been written without some practical acquaintance with theatrical society and dramatic matters, cannot be later than 1587. The story is chiefly taken from Thomas Fortescue's *Foreste*, a translation from the Spanish of Pedro de Mexia. It is remarkable that there is but one piece of direct evidence—a casual allusion by a contemporary—of Marlowe's authorship of this popular play, from which the greatness of the Elizabethan drama dates, but the internal evidence is conclusive. *Faustus* was probably produced in 1588, since a ballad apparently founded upon it was printed early in the following year. *The Jew of Malta* may be two years later, and *Edward II.*, the most regular of Marlowe's plays, two years later still. A tragedy on the story of Dido, probably an early and discarded work, was completed and published after Marlowe's death by Thomas Nash; he was author or part-author of *The Massacre of Paris*, an occasional piece hastily got up on contemporary transactions in France; and may have had a hand in *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VI.* His unfinished paraphrase of Musæus's *Hero and Leander*, and his blank verse translation of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, were entered for publication in September 1593, but not published for some years afterwards. The former was completed by Chapman. At the period of the entry Marlowe had been dead nearly four months. He had always been noted as a freethinker, and in May 1593 expressions used by or imputed to him attracted the notice of the Privy Council, who issued a warrant for his arrest. He was then at Chislehurst, but avoided apprehension, though withdrawing no further than Deptford, where, on June 1, he was killed in a tavern brawl. If there was any judicial investigation of the circumstances it has not been preserved, and it is now impossible to decide between conflicting rumours. Heavy imputations were made against Marlowe's moral character by an acquaintance named Baines, but no great credit can be given them when it is considered that Marlowe had no opportunity of vindicating himself, and that Baines was hanged not long afterwards. It is not likely that Marlowe was a very strict liver, but it is certain that he obtained the regard of Raleigh, Chapman, and Sir Thomas Walsingham, and a peculiar note of affection is traceable in most of the references made to him by contemporaries.

The great Italian poet Carducci, penetrated with admiration for the genius of Shakespeare, but not having attained to the recognition of his consummate art, calls him the English Æschylus, the very title by which English criticism has with more propriety designated Marlowe. The character bestowed upon Shakespeare by Voltaire and writers of the French classical school would have suited Marlowe very fairly. The great characteristic of his genius is audacity: he insists on dealing with the most illustrious persons, the strongest situations, and the most tempestuous passions. The great drawback to such manifestations of tragic force is the tendency to rant and hyperbole. Marlowe does not escape extravagance, but his bombast offends less than milder examples in less animated writers, for it never, as with these, suggests the suspicion of affectation. When Tamburlaine reproaches the captive monarchs yoked to his chariot:

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia,
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day ?

or Guise thus symbolises his dauntless ambition :

Set me to scale the high pyramides,
And thereon set the diadem of France ;
I'll either rend it with my nails to nought,
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell :

we feel that they are but speaking as the men conceived by Marlowe must have spoken, and that he is merely fulfilling his promise to his audience :

From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war ;
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.



Photo [Collis, Canterbury

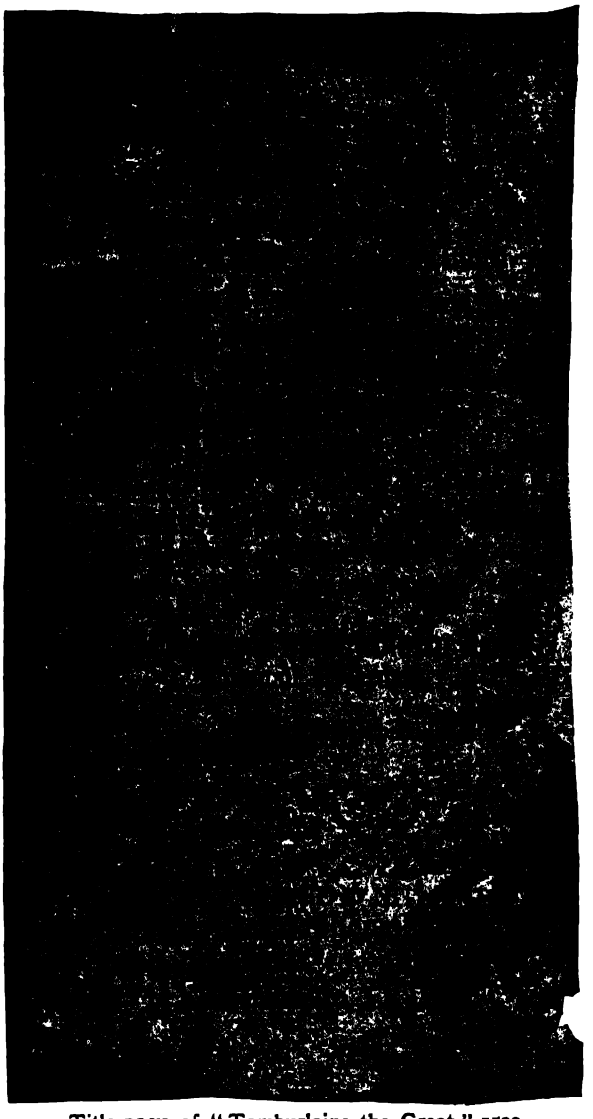
Memorial to Marlowe at Canterbury
From the statue by Onslow Ford

Tamburlaine is great enough and proud enough to speak the speeches set down for him, and Faustus is wretched enough to justify the utmost conceivable intensity of language. It was otherwise when Marlowe went to the same extremes with the character of a Jewish merchant.

Tamburlaine is rather epical than dramatic. There is, properly speaking, no plot ; the action is terminated by Tamburlaine's natural death, and the play is but the register of his conquests. There is no attempt at the nice delineation of character : the personages are mostly mere soldiers or feeble monarchs, men of steel or men of straw. The one interesting figure is that of Tamburlaine himself, the unconscious foreshadowing of Nietzsche's "Overman." In weaker hands than Marlowe's Tamburlaine would have been as incredible

"Tamburlaine"

as the Moors and Moguls of Dryden's heroic plays; but he is saved by his sincerity, and the touch of humility which instructs him that amid all his triumphs he is but the instrument of a higher Power:



Title-page of "Tamburlaine the Great," 1590
From the copy at Oxford

There is a God, full of revenging wrath,
From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey.

He is by no means inaccessible to the softer emotions, but his love-speeches are "buttered thunder":

Proud fury and intolerable fit
That dares torment the body of my love,
And scourge the scourge of the immortal gods!
Now are those spheres, where Cupid used to sit,
Wounding the world with wonder and with love,
Sadly supplied with pale and ghastly death,
Whose darts do pierce the centre of my soul.
Her sacred beauty hath enchanted Heaven;
And had she lived before the siege of Troy,
Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
Had not been named in Homer's *Iliad*.

The other speakers are less hyperbolical, but employ the same magnificent figurative style, which will not appear other than appropriate when it is considered that they are mostly kings. Thus, the eagle becomes in the mouth of Orchanes,

The princely fowl, that in her wings
Carries the fearful thunderbolts of Jove.

Sigismund's description of his army vies with the grandeur of the panorama unfolded by Satan from the specular mount in *Paradise Regained:*

But now, Orcanes, view my royal host,
That hides these plains, and seems as vast and wide
As doth the desert of Arabia
To those that stand on Bagdet's lofty tower;
Or as the ocean to the traveller
That rests upon the snowy Apennines;
And tell me whether I should stoop so low,
Or treat of peace with the Natolian king.

Passages like these, of which there are multitudes, show how entirely new a spirit had come into the English drama with Marlowe. Peele indeed had shown that poetry might be combined with playwriting, but his treatment was not of the kind that fills theatres. It excited neither pity nor terror, while Marlowe provided his audiences abundantly and even superabundantly with both. Much of his success was also due to his great improvements in blank verse, whose artistic merits might pass unappreciated, but which must have produced an immediately recognisable effect in augmenting the compass of stage declamation. The nature of the modifications introduced by him is ably and accurately stated by Addington Symonds, but it need not be supposed that Marlowe scanned his lines as he wrote them, or afterwards. He was simply one endowed with a fine instinct for verbal music, whose feeling and whose metre naturally and inevitably chimed together. Hence the infinite variety of his verse, as pause and stress are continually changing to suit the emotion to be expressed. In *Tamburlaine*, indeed, the lines too frequently end with a pause, but each has elasticity within itself. The superb resonance and solemn roll so frequently occurring have a deeper root in the mental constitution of the man.

Tamburlaine would be the *ne plus ultra* of braggadocios if he were not generally able to make his words good. But he is a thinker as well as a conqueror, and embodies the other side of his creator Marlowe's nature, the yearning for infinite knowledge no less than infinite power:

The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown
That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops
To thrust his doting father from his chair
And place himself in the empyreal Heaven
Moved me to manage arms against thy State.
What better precedent than mighty Jove?
Nature, that framed us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds;
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Wills us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

Tamburlaine's *summum bonum* seems a sad anti-climax to his spirit of

aspiration, but is necessitated by the dramatic situation, as he is excusing himself to the King of Persia for having taken the liberty to dethrone him. Marlowe's next play was to prove for how much intellectual conquests counted with him. It is his *Faustus*, founded on an English translation of the German chap-book in which the history of Faustus is narrated. The chap-book is closely followed, and as Marlowe has not, like Goethe, invented an underplot to knit the action together, the play is little but a succession of disconnected scenes. Faustus appears bemoaning the uncertainty of human knowledge, and the miserable results which the learned professions yield at their best:

> Philosophy is odious and obscure;
> Both law and physic are for petty wits;
> Divinity is basest of the three.



Woodcut of Faustus and Mephistopheles
From Marlowe's "Faustus," 1631

Bacon at the same time was thinking much the same thing, but he betook himself to the investigation of Nature. Faustus must have a shorter cut:

> These metaphysics of magicians
> And necromantic books are heavenly
> Lines, circles, scenes, letters and characters
> Aye, these are those that Faustus most desires.
> O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
> Is promised to the studious artisan!

Faustus obtains the object of his desire, and now the incurable vice of all dramas founded on infernal compacts appears: he does and can do nothing with it. He has been pleasing himself with thoughts of the tasks to which he will set his spirits:

I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the oceän for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land.

Unquestionably this is precisely what Faustus in his supposed situation would have done, but is precisely what he does not do, for the conclusive reason that magic transcends the resources of the stage. He follows the course prescribed for him by the chap-book, and, though exercising supernatural power in a small way, finds nothing worthy of himself to be done until he calls up Helen,

Fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

Except for an occasional outburst of magnificent poetry like this, the poet's power is reserved for the catastrophe, when, indeed, he surpasses himself:

The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul—half a drop, ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O spare me, Lucifer!—
Where is it now? 'tis gone, and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No! no!
Then will I headlong run into th earth;
Earth gape! O no! it will not harbour me!
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon labouring clouds,
That when they vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from their smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to Heaven.
Ah! half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon!

Milton, who must have recognised in Marlowe a spirit in many respects congenial to his own, probably took from these latter lines the idea of Satan being sped on his inauspicious voyage by—

The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre.

He is also indebted to his predecessor for a finer thought. The famous "Which way I turn is Hell, myself am Hell," must be a reminiscence conscious or unconscious of Marlowe:

Faustus. How comes it then that thou art out of hell ?
Mephistopheles. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Having thus depicted the passion for boundless power and the passion for boundless knowledge, it was natural that Marlowe in his next play, *The Jew of Malta* (1591 or 1592), should depict the passion for boundless wealth. Had this drama but proceeded as it began it would have rivalled anything he had previously written. The poetical side of money-getting was never so picturesquely set forth as in the opening soliloquy of Barabas :

As for those Sanaites,[1] and the men of Uz,
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
Here have I pursed their paltry silverlings.
Fie ! What a trouble 'tis to count this trash !
Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.
The needy groom that never fingered groat
Would make a miracle of this much coin.
But he whose steel-barred coffers are crammed full,
And all his lifetime hath been tired,[2]
Wearying his fingers' ends with telling it,
Would in his age be loth to labour so,
And for a pound to sweat himself to death.
Give me the merchants of the Indian mines
That trade in metal of the purest mould ;
The wealthy Moor that in the Eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up,
And in his house heap pearls like pebble-stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight :
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price
As one of them indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve, in peril of calamity,
To ransom great kings from captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth,
And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
Infinite riches in a little room.

We may exclaim with Goethe in a different connection :

Doth not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
His palace ?

The ensuing scenes are highly spirited. Barabas has hardly finished

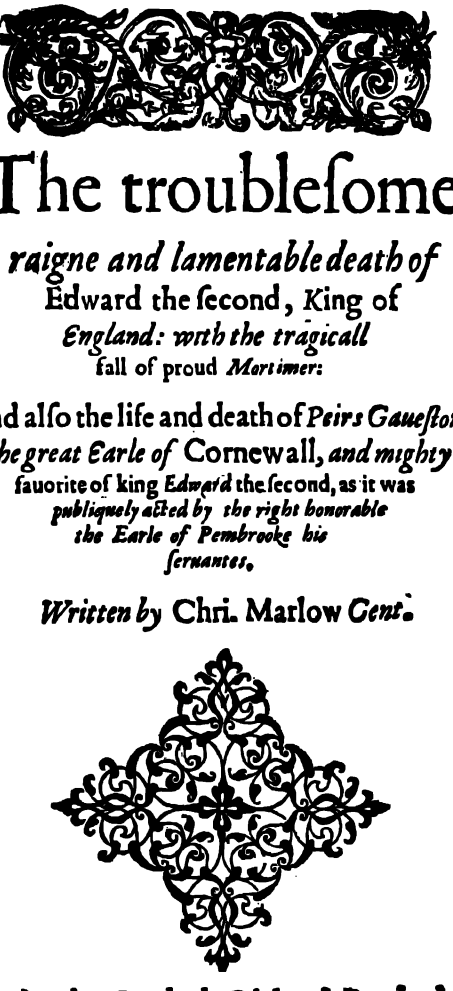
[1] The old editions have "Samintes"; modern editions, "Samnites," until that of Mr. Bullen, who reads "Sabans," because the Book of Job represents the Sabæans as neighbours of "the man of Uz." Ingenious as the emendation is, it appears to us too violent ; "Sabans" could hardly be misprinted "Samintes." *Sana* was the ancient capital of Sabæa, as it is now of Yemen, and was known to the Western world by the account of Ludovico di Varthema, who visited it at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

[2] To be pronounced as a trisyllable.

vaunting ere he is summoned before the Knights of St. John, the lords of Malta. The Turks have sent in a claim for arrears of tribute, and the Knights are at their wits' end how to meet it, until a happily inspired person suggests that there are Jews in the land. Barabas and his countrymen are called in and indented upon for half their possessions, most reasonably, in the Knights' opinion, seeing that—

> Through sufferance of your hateful lives,
> Who stand accurséd in the sight of Heaven,
> These taxes and afflictions are befallen,—

Barabas, recalcitrating, is deprived of the whole, including ten thousand Portugal pieces and many priceless gems which he has providently concealed in his house, but which are unavailable on account of the mansion having been appropriated for a nunnery. His daughter Abigail, by her father's instructions, enters the convent simulating conversion, but in reality to carry off the treasure. She helps Barabas to his gold, but becomes a Christian in good earnest, and from this point the father goes mad, and the play along with him. The least of Barabas's crimes is to poison his daughter, and he ends by being precipitated into a boiling caldron which he had prepared for a Turkish prince. Some gleams of human feeling break through, and the ferocity produced by a sense of insufferable wrong is powerfully rendered, but in the main it is painful to see the waste of so fine a situation, which in Shakespeare's hands would have provided delicious scenes of comedy to relieve the intensity of the tragic action, and Barabas would have been no less human than Shylock. But Marlowe's comedy is farce, and he knew not how to paint


The troubleſome
raigne and lamentable death of
Edward the ſecond, King of
England: with the tragicall
fall of proud Mortimer:

And alſo the life and death of Peirs Gaueſton,
the great Earle of Cornewall, and mighty
fauorite of king Edward the ſecond, as it was
publiquely acted by the right honorable
the Earle of Pembrooke his
ſeruantes.

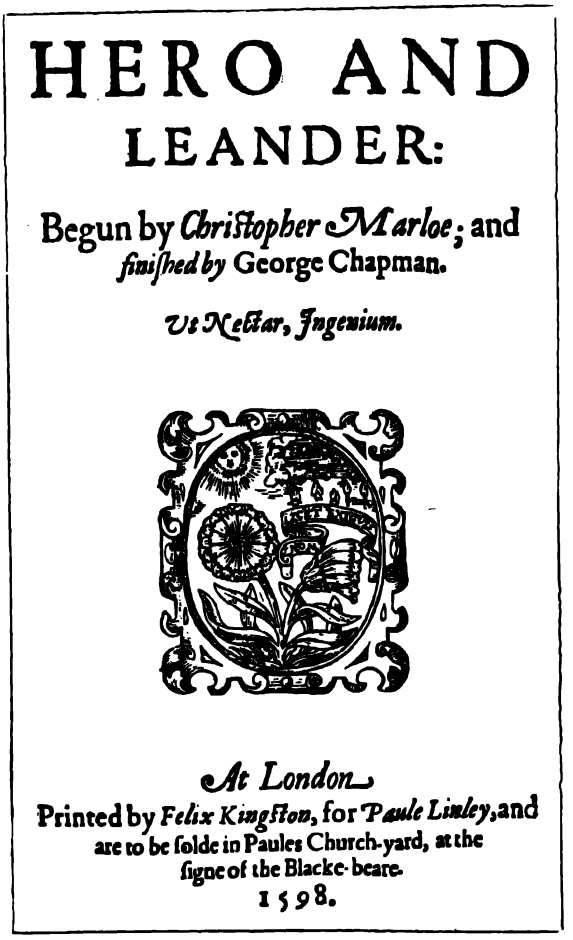
Written by Chri. Marlow Gent.

Imprinted at London by Richard Bradocke,
for William Ionas dwelling neere Holbourne conduit,
at the ſigne of the Gunne. 1598.

Title-page of Marlowe's "Edward II.," 1598

woman. The plot of *The Jew of Malta*, moreover, seems to be his own invention, and he needed the restraining influence of a prescribed subject; otherwise the impetuosity of his genius hurries him into extravagance.

Marlowe's next appearance showed that the eclipse was but temporary, for *Edward II.* (1593) is an excellent play. It wants the grand conception of his preceding dramas, of which the subject would not allow, but the action is better managed, being neither capricious as in *Tamburlaine*, nor slack and disconnected as in *Faustus*, nor luridly melodramatic as in *The Jew of Malta*. History is in general faithfully followed. The weak and amiable character of Edward, doting with irrational fondness on his favourite, is well depicted, though there is nothing of that spirit of divination which, in the similar character of Richard II., enables Shakespeare to penetrate so far below the visible surface of things. Marlowe draws Edward as any one would have endeavoured to draw him, though few would have succeeded so well; and the pathos of the dismal scenes of Edward's fall and murder is that which every writer must have essayed, though few could have made it so poignant. There is more originality in an exquisite stroke of pathos near the end, where Edward III. orders the imprisonment of his mother:


HERO AND
LEANDER:

Begun by *Christopher Marloe*; and *finished by* George Chapman.

Ut Nectar, Ingenium.

At London
Printed by *Felix Kingston*, for *Paule Linley*, and are to be solde in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Blacke-beare.
1598.

Title-page of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," 1598

Queen Isab. Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived,
Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.
King Edw. Away with her, her words enforce these tears,
And I shall pity her if she speak again.

Marlowe's solitary lyric, *Come Live with Me and be My Love*, is too familiar for quotation, but we cannot pass over his unfinished paraphrase of the *Hero and Leander* of Musæus, completed after his death by Chapman. It is a

marvellous transposition of Greek music into an Elizabethan key ; it scintillates with conceits, strokes of *esprit*, and touches of description unimaginable by even so late a writer as Musæus ; yet though the simplicity is gone, the charm remains. The versification also is remarkable, and is perhaps to this day the best pattern we have for the translation of Greek hexameter :

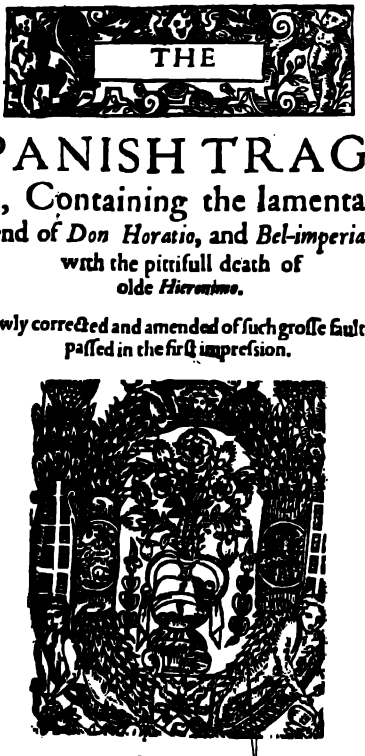
> He kneeled, but unto her devoutly prayed ;
> Chaste Hero to herself thus softly said,
> " Were I the saint he worships, I would hear him " ;
> And, as she spake these words, came somewhat near him ;
> He started up ; she blushed as one ashamed,
> Wherewith Leander much more was inflamed.
> He touched her hand ; in touching it she trembled,
> Love deeply grounded hardly is dissembled.
> These lovers parleyed by the touch of hands :
> True love is mute, and oft amazéd stands.
> Thus while dumb signs their yielding hearts entangled,
> The air with sparks of living fire was spangled,
> And night, deep drenched in misty Acheron,
> Heaved up her head, and half the world upon
> Breathed darkness forth (dark night is Cupid's day).
> And now begins Leander to display
> Love's holy fire with words, with sighs and tears
> Which like sweet music entered Hero's ears :
> And yet at every word she turned aside,
> And always cut him off as he replied.

Marlowe is the only dramatic poet of his age who can for a moment be measured with Shakespeare. If—as they probably would—added years had brought the philosophic mind to one to whom profound thought was already no stranger, he would have been in many respects a formidable rival. He could never have approached Shakespeare's delineation of female character, or his insight into human nature in general, or his illimitable sway over the supernatural, or his infallible accuracy. Nor, with his deficiency in humour, could any comic masterpiece have proceeded from his pen. He might have addicted himself principally to English historical drama, which Shakespeare, easy-tempered as Sophocles, would have conceded to him : we should have had unsurmised exercises of Shakespeare's powers in other directions, but we should have lost Falstaff. Emulation and example might have exalted the earth-born Titan to a seat among the gods, but it was not to be :

> Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burnéd is Apollo's laurel bough.

THOMAS KYD (1559–1595 ?) may be regarded as an understudy of Marlowe, whose freethinking views he was accused of sharing. The view, however that he wrote his *Spanish Tragedy* in emulation of *The Jew of Malta* is irreconcilable with dates, for the *Tragedy* was not produced later than 1588 and the *Jew* certainly was. It is more probable that Marlowe was allured by the great success of Kyd's tragedy into spoiling his own by spicing it with horrors. Outdo Kyd in this line he could not : this is the Ghost's complacent catalogue of the catastrophes of the *dramatis personæ :*

Horatio murdered in his father's bower;
Wild Serberine by Pedringano slain;
False Pedringano hanged by quaint device;
Fair Isabella by herself misdone;
Prince Balthazar by Bell-Imperia stabbed;
The Duke of Castile and his wicked son
Both done to death by old Jeronimo;
My Bell-Imperia fallen, as Dido fell;
And good Jeronimo slain by himself.


THE
SPANISH TRAGE-
die, Containing the lamentable
end of *Don Horatio*, and *Bel-imperia*:
with the pittifull death of
olde *Hieronimo*.
Newly corrected and amended of ſuch groſſe faults as
paſſed in the firſt impreſsion.
AT LONDON
Printed by *Edward Allde*, for
Edward White.

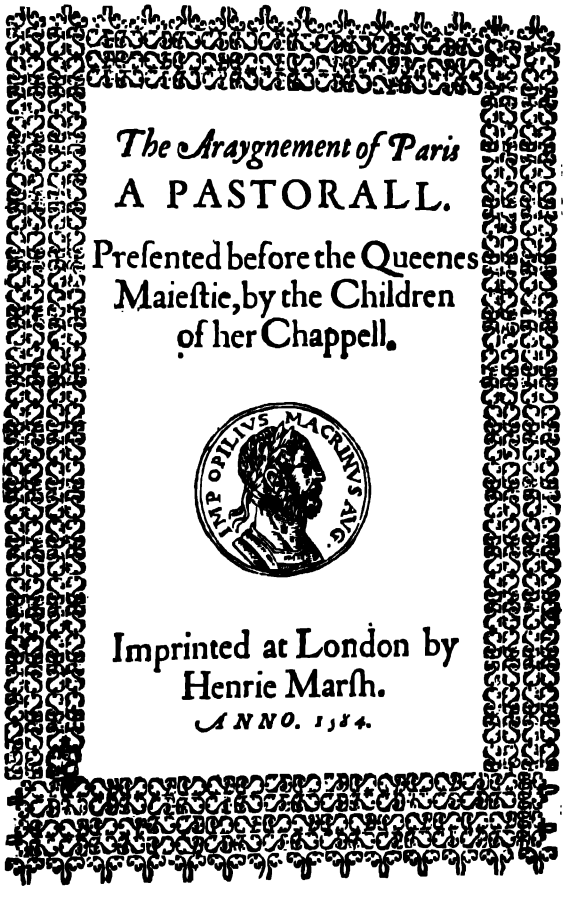
Title-page of Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy"

Melodramatic as the *Spanish Tragedy* is, the plot is better constructed than that of any previous English tragedy. The edition of 1602 has extensive additions in a much superior style: and as Henslowe's accounts show that Ben Jonson about this time received payment for making additions to the play, they are probably by him, though they bear little resemblance to his usual manner. Kyd was an industrious pamphleteer and translator, and is the reputed author of two other tragedies of little importance. It is extremely probable that he wrote the old play of *Hamlet*, now lost, upon which Shakespeare's tragedy was founded.

George Peele (1558?–1597?) was the son of the clerk of Christ's Hospital, where he received his education, and whence he proceeded to Pembroke College, Oxford, and from thence to Christ Church. His University reputation was that of a poet, a wit, and a spendthrift, characters which he filled during his London life. Very little, however, is definitely known of him, though a fair general inference as to his character may be derived from the admonitions of the repentant Greene, and the publication under his name of a volume of jests, few of which can have actually proceeded from him. In his writings he appears the scholar, and a man of refined and amiable feeling. Except for a fling at Gabriel Harvey in defence of his friend Nash, he took no part in the literary controversies of his day, and was "no man's enemy but his own." He was dead when Meres wrote in 1598.

Peele in some measure anticipated Marlowe by his improvement in the modulation of blank verse, which is fully developed in his first play, *The Arraignment of Paris* (probably 1581). He does not attain to Marlowe's "mighty line," but he shows that blank verse may be sweet and various. The piece itself, as well as the later *Old Wives' Tale* (probably 1593), exhibits Peele as the introducer into England of romantic and fanciful comedy, a precursor of Shakespeare in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The idea of *The Arraignment of Paris* is ingenious. Paris is indicted for having improperly awarded the apple to Venus, whereas it ought to have been bestowed upon "Eliza," otherwise "Zabeta," otherwise Queen Elizabeth. Diana retries the case, and "Eliza" gets the apple. Elizabeth's perfections are thus glowingly celebrated:

She giveth laws of justice and
of peace;
And on her head, as fits her
fortune best,
She wears a wreath of laurel,
gold, and palm;
Her robes of purple and of
scarlet dye;
Her veil of white, as best befits
a maid:
Her ancestors live in the House
of Fame;
She giveth arms of happy victory,
And flowers to deck her lions
crowned with gold.
This peerless nymph, whom
heaven and earth beloves,
This paragon, this only, this is she
In whom do meet so many gifts
in one,
On whom our country gods so
often gaze
In honour of whose name the
Muses sigh.



Title-page of Peele's "Arraignment of Paris," 1584

Fancy and picturesque description are at their best throughout, and the subject does not require the gift of delineating character, in which Peele was so deficient. The pleadings of the goddesses with Paris for the apple evidently gave hints to Tennyson for his *Œnone*.

The Old Wives' Tale, if infinitely less brilliant, is remarkable for the great amount of miscellaneous folk-lore which it holds in solution, and as a foreshadowing of Milton's *Comus*. The two brothers who come to deliver their

sister from the enchanter are clearly the rude originals of the corresponding personages in Milton; and Peele might have supplied his successor with something more than a hint if he had treated his subject more seriously. He is evidently far from realising the poetic capabilities of the fairy tale, upon which he has stumbled by accident. Had he wrought more in the spirit of an artist, he might have been the Tieck or Gozzi of his age. The irregularities of his life avenged themselves upon his poetry: being always needy, he was always hasty and fitful. If ever he wrote to please himself it was in his *David and Bethsabe*, weak in action and character, but full of charming poetry, of whose constant lusciousness we almost tire in default of the relief of vigorous action:

> Come, gentle Zephyr, tricked with those perfumes
> That erst in Eden sweetened Adam's love,
> And stroke my bosom with thy silken fan;
> This shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof for thee;
> Thy body, smoother than this waveless spring,
> And purer than the substance of the same,
> Can creep through that his lances cannot pierce;
> Thou and thy sister, soft and sacred Air,
> Goddess of Life, and governess of health,
> Keep every fountain fresh and arbour sweet;
> No brazen gate her passage can repulse,
> Nor bushy thicket bar thy subtle breath;
> Then deck thee with thy loose delightsome robes,
> And on thy wings bring delicate perfumes,
> To play the wanton with us through the leaves.

In his other tragedies, *Edward I.* and *The Battle of Alcazar*, Peele essayed a department of the drama for which his genius did not qualify him. Both are occasional pieces, and *Edward I.* is disgraced by libels on one of our most illustrious Queens, Eleanor of Castile, who, partly indeed upon the authority of an ancient ballad, suffers for the unpopularity of her countrymen. There is, however, a fine passage on the glories of England:

> Illustrious England, ancient seat of kings,
> Whose chivalry hath royal'sed thy fame,
> That sounding bravely through terrestrial vale,
> Proclaiming conquests, spoils, and victories,
> Rings glorious echoes through the farthest world;
> What warlike nation, trained in feats of arms,
> What barbarous people, stubborn or untamed,
> What climate under the meridian signs,
> Or frozen zone under his brumal plage,[1]
> Erst have not quaked and trembled at the name
> Of Britain and her mighty conquerors?
> Her neighbour-nations, as Scotland, Denmark, France,
> Awed with their deeds and jealous of her arms,
> Have begged defensive and offensive leagues.
> Thus Europe, rich and mighty in her kings,
> Hath feared brave England, dreadful in her Kings,
> And now, to eternise Albion's champions,
> Equivalent with Trojans' ancient fame,

[1] Quarter of the compass.

Comes lovely Edward from Jerusalem,
Veering before the wind, ploughing the sea,
His stretchéd sails filled with the breath of men,
That through the world admire his manliness.

Much of Peele's dramatic work is in rhyme. The fourteen-syllable couplet which, in common with other early dramatists, he frequently affects, is as unsatisfactory in his hands as in those of all other writers, but in heroic rhyme he steers an even course between the licence of such a poem as *Sordello* and the monotony of the regulation couplet, and while vying with the richness of Keats does not, like Keats in his earlier writings, allow his matter to be prescribed by his rhyme. The following is from *The Arraignment of Paris:*

Not Iris in her pride and bravery
Adorns her arch with such variety;
Nor doth the milk-white way, in frosty night,
Appear so fair and beautiful in sight
As does these fields and groves and sweetest bowers,
Bestrewed and decked with parti-coloured flowers.
Along the bubbling brooks and silver glide
That at the bottom do in silence slide,
The water-flowers and lilies on the banks,
Like blazing comets, burgeon all in ranks;
Under the hawthorn and the poplar tree
Where sacred Phœbe may delight to be,
The primrose and the purple hyacinth,
The dainty violet, and the wholesome minth,
The double daisy, and the cowslip, queen
Of summer flowers, do overpeer the green;
And round about the valley as ye pass,
Ye may ne see for peeping flowers the grass,
That well the mighty Juno, and the rest,
May boldly think to be a welcome guest
On Ida hills, when, to approve the thing,
The Queen of Flowers prepares a second spring.

An important part of Peele's literary work, verging on the dramatic, was the composition of pageants, and poetical speeches to be delivered or perused on public occasions. Such are his Address, in extremely spirited and sonorous blank verse, to Drake and Norris on their expedition to Portugal in 1589, and his congratulations to Essex upon his return. The following beautiful lines upon the retirement of Sir Henry Lee from his office of Champion to the Queen are appended to *Polyhymnia, describing the immediate Triumph at Tilt before her Majesty on the 17th of November last past* (1590):

His golden locks Time hath to silver turned:
O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, youth are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet soon shall make an hive for bees,
And lovers' sonnets turn to holy psalms;

A man-at-arms must serve upon his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are Old Age his alms;
But though from Court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song:
Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Cursed be the soul that think her any wrong!
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

With two exceptions, the plays ascribed to Robert Greene add little to his reputation, and one of the two, *George-a-Greene*, is of doubtful authenticity. *Friar Bacon*, however, is certainly his, and is a very good piece in its way. It dates from 1589, and seems to have been produced in consequence of the popularity of Marlowe's *Faustus*, to which it may be regarded as a humorous appendix. Greene is no more comparable to Marlowe than Miles, Bacon's servant, who, before departing for the infernal regions, makes, likes Bacchus in Aristophanes, particular inquiry respecting the inns, is to the grand and tragic figure of Faustus. Yet below, as above, there are many mansions, and there is ample room for Greene's broad comedy, mingled as it is with notes of a higher strain. The old chap-book, one of the most diverting of its class, is closely followed. There is ample variety of action, and all the dramatic motives are attractive in their way, the young prince's attachment to fair Margaret, the keeper's daughter, his self-denial in renouncing her, Bacon's professional pride and patriotic emotion, his humiliation and repentance, and the humours of friends, serving-men, and inferior conjurers. This description of a rustic beauty is really idyllic:

Into the milkhouse went I with the maid,
And there amongst the cream-bowls she did shine
As Pallas 'mongst her princely huswifery.
She turned her smock over her lily arms,
And dived them into milk to run her cheese;
But, whiter than the milk, her crystal skin,
Chequered with lines of azure, made her[1] blush
That art or nature durst bring for compare.

The uncertainties of dates must render it a question whether the first considerable representation of the fanciful drama in England was Peele or John Lyly, whom we have already encountered as the author of *Euphues*. Peele's *Arraignment of Paris* and Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phaon* were all printed in the same year, 1584, but may all have appeared a few years earlier. *The Woman in the Moon*, printed as Lyly's in his lifetime, seems to claim to be his first dramatic attempt, but his authorship is doubtful. Circumstances directed him into a different path from the other dramatists of his day; his plays, composed by a courtier for a Court, were further written to be acted by the children of St. Paul's: it was, therefore, necessary that they should be light and free from overwhelming emotion, and not less so that, even

[1] Every other woman.

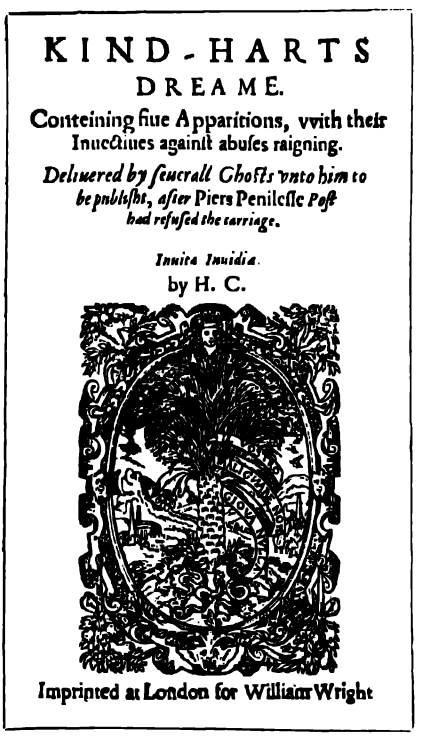
though touching on themes which would not now be brought to the notice of children, their gaiety should be the gaiety of innocence. Lyly has solved these problems very successfully. *Alexander and Campaspe* is called "a tragicall comedy," but has neither agitation nor suspense. Except for the cynic Diogenes, more bark than bite, all glides pleasantly along, and the interest is chiefly derived from the collision of such various characters. Alexander is the hero in undress, Apelles the accomplished but honest courtier. Lyly has made but little of the opportunity he had for delineating the conflict between love and ambition in the breast of Campaspe; but, even if he had the power, this scarcely entered into his plan. What especially distinguishes his work from his predecessors is his proficiency in light and nimble repartee, as in the scene when Apelles experiences the honour and embarrassment of a royal pupil:

Alex. Lend me thy pencil, Apelles: I will paint, and thou shalt judge.
Apel. Here.
Alex. The coal [1] breaks.
Apel. You lean too hard.
Alex. Now it blacks not.
Apel. You lean too soft.
Alex. This is awry.
Apel. Your eye goeth not with your hand.
Alex. Now it is worse.
Apel. Your hand goeth not with your mind.
Alex. Nay, if all be too hard or soft—so many rules and regards that one's hand, one's eye, one's mind must all draw together—I had rather be setting of a battle than blotting of a board. But how have I done here?
Apel. Like a king.
Alex. I think so, but nothing more unlike a painter.

Sappho and Phaon may be described as a romance dramatised. *Galatea* turns upon the idea, pretty but perilous if treated by a writer of less than Lyly's delicacy, of the mutual passion of two maidens, which can only obtain fruition by metamorphosing one of them into a youth. Venus takes the matter in hand, and the curtain falls on the pair marching together to the temple where the charm is to be wrought, ignorant upon which of the two it is to take effect. *Endymion* and *Midas* are pastorals with a political purpose. In the former (1579?) the Maiden Queen, who appears as Cynthia, having got beyond the age of coquetry, is complimented upon her unwedded state. There is more pith and more poetry in Shakespeare's "fair vestal throned in the West" than in the whole of Lyly, who nevertheless deserves the praise of a graceful imagination, which he seems to have exerted in the interest of Leicester. Midas is Philip of Spain, endowed with the golden touch as a symbol of the wealth of the Indies, and with ass's ears, ostensibly for preferring Pan's music to Apollo's, but really for his invasion of the island realm of Lesbos. He was probably a better judge of poetry than of music, for Pan's song is as much before Apollo's as his pipe is inferior to Apollo's lyre:

[1] Charcoal.

Pan's Syrinx was a girl indeed,
Though now she's turned into a reed,
From that dear reed Pan's pipe doth come,
A pipe that strikes Apollo dumb;
Nor flute nor lute nor gittern can
So chant it as the pipe of Pan;
Cross-gartered swains and dairy girls,
With faces smug and round as pearls,
When Pan's shrill pipe begins to play,
With dancing wear out night and day.
The bagpipe's drone his hum lays by
When Pan sounds up his minstrelsy.
His minstrelsy! O base! This quill
Which at my mouth with wind I fill,
Puts me in mind, though her I miss,
That still my Syrinx' lips I kiss.


KIND-HARTS
DREAME.
Conteining fiue Apparitions, with their
Inuectiues againſt abuſes raigning.
Deliuered by ſeuerall Ghoſts vnto him to
be publiſht, after Piers Penileſſe *Poſt*
had refuſed the carriage.
Inuita Inuidia.
by H. C.
Imprinted at London for William Wright

Title-page of Chettle's "Kind Heart's Dream"

The death of Marlowe has already brought us beyond the dawn of Shakespeare, who in 1593 was very probably writing *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III.* Lodge's *Marius and Sylla* and Nash's *Will Summers's Last Will* are insignificant. The other dramatic poets of eminence who were on the point of appearing belong to the Shakespearean epoch, if we except ANTHONY MUNDAY (1553–1633) and HENRY CHETTLE (1560?–1607). These industrious playwrights (Chettle alone wrote thirteen plays by himself, and thirty-six in conjunction with others, but only one of the former and four of the latter are preserved) and who were not less industrious as pamphleteers, and in Munday's case in the translation of romances, worked so much in collaboration with each other and other poets that it is well-nigh impossible to allot to each his due. There can be little doubt, however, that the really beautiful portion of Chettle's *Patient Grissel* proceeds from his colleague Dekker, and as he only had ten shillings for "mending" the first part of "Post Haste Munday's" *Robin Hood*, and the following charming verses alone would have been cheap at the price, they must be assigned to Munday:

Marian, thou seest, though courtly pleasures want,
Yet country sport in Sherwood is not scant:
For the soul-ravishing, delicious sound
Of instrumental music we have found

The wingéd quiristers with divers notes
Sent from their quaint recording pretty throats
On every branch that compasseth our bower,
Without command contenting us each hour:
For arras-hangings and rich tapestry
We have sweet nature's best embroidery:
For thy steel glass, wherein thou wont'st to look
Thy crystal eyes gaze in a crystal brook:
At Court a flower or two did deck thy head,
Now with whole garlands it is circléd;
For what we want in wealth, we have in flowers,
And what we lose in hall, we find in bowers.

The play was first performed in February 1599, shortly, as is probable before *As You Like It*, for which it may have afforded hints.

Another set of plays not to be entirely overlooked are the historical, all anonymous. One, *Locrine*, was attributed to Shakespeare in his lifetime, not, assuredly, on the ground of its merits. Another, *Leir*, served as the groundwork for one of the greatest of his plays. Of the chronicle dramas from English history, *Edward III.* is by far the most important, and the underplot of Edward and the Countess of Salisbury has been thought to betray the hand of Shakespeare. Shakespeare is but little indebted to the early plays on Henry V. and Richard III., but he has observed the dramatic economy of *The Troublesome Reign of King John* very exactly, although the diction is almost entirely his own. Although the language of the old play is in general but poor, it has passages suggesting that a superior writer may have had a hand in it. Such is the delineation of Fauconbridge's hesitation between the solid advantage of being acknowledged the son of one's reputed father and the lustre of illegitimate royal birth:

Methinks I hear a hollow echo sound,
That Philip is the son unto a king.
The whistling leaves upon the trembling trees
Whistle in concert I am Richard's son;
The bubbling murmur of the water's fall
Records *Philippus Regis Filius*.
Birds in their flight make music with their wings,
Filling the air with glory of my birth:
Birds, bubbles, leaves, and mountains' echoes all
Ring in my ear that I am Richard's son.
Fond man! ah, whither art thus carriéd?
How are thy thoughts enwrapt in honour's heaven,
Forgetful what thou art, and whence thou camest?
Thy father's land cannot maintain these thoughts:
These thoughts are far unfitting Fauconbridge;
And well they may, for why? this mounting mind
Doth soar too high to stoop to Fauconbridge.

It remains to mention a play differing in subject and style from any of the rest. This is *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, chiefly by Thomas Hughes of Gray's

[1] In all the editions this soliloquy is continued by six more lines, attributed to Fauconbridge. It seems to us clear that the first two are spoken by John, urging Fauconbridge to make up his mind and announce his decision without further ado; and the remainder by Lady Fauconbridge, dissuading him from yielding up his estate.

Inn, and performed by members of the Inn before Queen Elizabeth in February 1588. It is remarkable, as shown by Mr. Cunliffe, for the great indebtedness of the author to Seneca, and possesses considerable literary merit, but none of the requisites of popularity. The contrast between the world-weary Arthur, sated with battle and victory, and almost ready to resign his crown to his usurping kinsman, and the fierce eager ambition of Mordred, is original and impressive.

CHAPTER V

SHAKESPEARE

WHEN the Greeks spoke of Homer, they did not always name him. They said *the* poet, certain that no vestige of doubt could exist as to the application of the description. Englishmen might thus speak of Shakespeare with no less security from misapprehension. In a literature eminent beyond most for the multitude of its great poets, many of whom may have excelled Shakespeare in this or that branch of art, not one could be selected as a possible rival to Shakespeare, and for this plain reason, that their excellence is particular, and his is universal. There is nothing within the compass of poetry in which he has not either achieved supremacy or shown that supremacy lay within his power; there is no situation of human fortune or emotion of the human bosom for which he has not the right word; if he cannot be described as of imagination all compact, it is only because his observation is still more extraordinary. His art is as consummate as his genius, and save when he wrote or planned in haste, impeccable. Infallibility may equally be predicated of the other two supreme poets of the world, Homer and Dante, but the restriction of their spheres forbids any claim to Shakespeare's distinguishing characteristic of universality. The knowledge, and by consequence the sympathy, of their periods was narrow in comparison with his; he was in contact with a thousand things of which they had no cognisance; while, since Shakespeare's day, human interests and activities have so greatly multiplied that, unless civilisation should retrograde, the occurrence of another universal poet may well be deemed impossible.

This overawing vastness of Shakespeare renders it almost impossible to obtain a point of view from which he can be contemplated as a whole. The critic will do best to gradually wind into his subject by a recital of the ordinary, and in Shakespeare's case the obscure, circumstances of ancestry and parentage.

That the apparent etymology of the surname Shakespeare is also the correct one is proved by the existence of an Italian representative, Crollalanza, which cannot possibly be a corruption of anything, but must have been bestowed upon the original bearer from some connection between him and the wielding of the spear. A similar cause would originate in England the name Shakespeare, which is of considerable antiquity in the south midland counties. Unfortunately, the earliest record of its occurrence discovered so

far is one establishing that the bearer, William "Saxspere" of Clopton in Gloucestershire, a hamlet about seven miles south of Stratford-on-Avon, was hanged in 1248. Another early Shakespeare is recorded as a felon, and another as a perturber of the King's peace. It may have been some association of this description that in 1487 induced an Oxford scholar and incipient Don, not gifted with the faculty of prevision, to change his name of Shakespeare into Saunders, "because it was thought low (*vile*)." Others were less sensitive; the name is found from Penrith in the north to Brixton in the south; and the industry of Mrs. Stopes has unearthed an amazing number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Shakespeares, principally in War-



Shakespeare's Birthplace before restoration
From Wheler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon," 1806

wickshire. There, in 1557, John Shakespeare, formerly of Snitterfield, and probably son of Richard Shakespeare, yeoman of that village, but himself of Stratford-on-Avon, married at Aston Cantlowe, Mary, daughter of Robert Arden, a farmer, but sprung from a good Warwickshire family. To them in 1564, and as tradition declares, on April 23, the day dedicated to England's patron saint, was born WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. The entry of baptism is on April 26.

At the time of Shakespeare's birth his father was a prosperous tradesman, who had filled various municipal offices, including that of chamberlain to the borough. In 1565 he was alderman, in 1568 bailiff, and, in the light of things to come, it is most interesting to learn that in that capacity he was the first townsman of Stratford to accord an official welcome to players, the

companies of the Queen and of the Earl of Worcester. So late as 1575 he appears as buying two houses, but shortly afterwards he is so impoverished as to be unable to contribute fourpence towards the relief of the poor. In 1578 and 1579 he is found alienating his wife's property at Wilmcote and Snitterfield, and in 1586 he is deprived of his alderman's gown for non-attendance, being apparently unable to leave his home for fear of arrest. These circumstances must have made Shakespeare's youth unhappy, notwithstanding the antidotes of a singularly sunny and genial disposition, and of the high spirits natural to his age. The inevitable decline of the family in the estimation of their neighbours must have been especially galling to him; and it is probable that his sense of slight and wrong reappears in Hamlet's famous soliloquy, where many griefs are enumerated of which the Prince of Denmark could have had no experience, but which were only too familiar to John Shakespeare and his son. Among them is "the law's delay," of which the elder Shakespeare made ample trial in an unsuccessful litigation to recover his wife's property. Fortunately these embarrassments could not prevent Shakespeare from receiving a good education, he being entitled to free tuition at the Stratford grammar school. The character of the education then given at English grammar schools, a point of great importance in connection with the attempts that have been made to represent Shakespeare as an ignorant man, has been ably investigated by the late Professor Spencer Baynes. Mr. Baynes shows that the acquaintance with the technicalities of rhetorical instruction demanded by the allusions in *Love's Labour's Lost* could easily have been acquired by a stay at school of five years, agreeing exceedingly well with the probable age, seven or eight, of Shakespeare's entering the school and that of twelve or thirteen, when he would be old enough to assist his father in his business, and, considering the growing embarrassments of the elder Shakespeare, would almost certainly be withdrawn from school for that purpose. By this time he would have read in the ordinary course Valerius Cato, Æsop, Mantuan, a considerable part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and something of Cicero, Terence, and Virgil. This would be a fair Latin outfit, and there is no good reason to believe that Shakespeare materially augmented it in after life. In the ordinary course Greek grammar would be commenced in the fifth year, but no Greek author would be read. Mr. Churton Collins has endeavoured with much ingenuity to establish Shakespeare's acquaintance with Greek literature, but when it is considered that he could only have acquired Greek in mature life by solitary study or private instruction, and that Latin translations would be difficult and uninviting, the initial improbability must be held to outweigh the precarious evidence of apparent coincidences which may be otherwise accounted for. It may be added that there was no such Hellenic sentiment in Shakespeare's day as might in our own induce a man to take up the study for himself. The peculiar charm of the language and literature, which have yielded such stores of inspiration to the poets of the nineteenth century, was as yet but feebly discerned. The classical atmosphere was almost entirely Latin. Another important factor

in Shakespeare's education must not be overlooked—the English Bible, which in the Genevan or the Bishops' version would be diligently read in the school. Shylock's speech, "When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep," shows Shakespeare's intimate acquaintance with Scripture narrative.

John Shakespeare was probably a man of many occupations, and among them may well have been that of a butcher. The Stratford tradition preserved by Aubrey that young Shakespeare assisted his father in this business is con-



Shakespeare's Birthplace as restored at the present day

From a photograph

firmed by a minute detail. "When he killed a *calf*," says Aubrey, "he would do it in a high style and make a speech." The lad would not yet be old enough to slaughter an ox, but would be fully up to a calf. If, as Aubrey proceeds to inform us—and there is no reason to discredit a tradition which there could be no motive for inventing—"there was at that time another butcher's son in this town that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural wit, but died young," it follows that Shakespeare himself must have been regarded as a "natural wit" beyond the common. The funeral orations upon the calves, interesting prefigurements of the future discourses composed for Mark Antony, may have served for a time as a vent for the juvenile ferment of a poetical soul, but Shakespeare is not likely to have continued long at the trade of butchering. It is a tribute to the universality of his genius that almost every possible secular occupation has been conjectured for him upon

the strength of what has been deemed the internal testimony of his own writings. The only external testimony worth anything, and its value is not slight, is the tradition that he was for some time an assistant in a school. This would be exactly the profession which a well-educated young man at a loss for a livelihood would be likely to follow; and the truth of the statement is strongly confirmed by the scholastic scenes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which certainly seem to proceed from one who had not



Anne Hathaway's Cottage

From a photograph

merely learned but taught the accidence. It further explains the remarkable familiarity with legal technicalities which has led many to believe that Shakespeare must have been a lawyer. A schoolmaster would be very likely to be employed by attorneys in copying documents. A word may be added respecting Shakespeare's handwriting, which has been made an argument against his authorship of the works ascribed to him. All the undoubted autographs of Shakespeare appear on legal documents, and are written in the hand appropriate to business matters. This affords no proof that he could not write the Italian script if he thought fit. Leaving the literary side of the question out of sight, he must, as actor and manager, have continually received letters in the Italian character, and it would be surprising if he could not write what he must have been well able to read. "Methinks we do know the sweet Roman hand."

If Shakespeare at any time taught school it will be a question whether this preceded or followed, or both, one of the most important events of his life, his marriage, about November 1582, with Anne or Agnes Hathaway, daughter, as is most probable, of Richard Hathaway, a yeoman of Shottery, then lately deceased. The register of the marriage, doubtless celebrated in the neighbourhood, has not been found, but the date is approximatively ascertained by a singular document dated November 28, 1582, and preserved in the registry of the diocese of Worcester, by which two Stratford husbandmen undertake to bear the bishop harmless in the event of any irregularity being found to exist in the marriage then about to be contracted. As it is provided that the banns shall only be asked once, as the consent of the bride's friends is stipulated for while the bridegroom's parents are ignored, and as the birth of a daughter in May 1583 discloses the existence of a pre-nuptial intimacy, the affair had evidently some very unsatisfactory features, not the least of which was that the bride was eight years older than her husband. Shakespeare has given the world the benefit of his experience when he says in *Twelfth Night:*

> Let thy love be younger than thyself,
> Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.

And in Prospero's impressive warning to Ferdinand:

> If thou dost break her virgin knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be ministered,
> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
> To make this contract grow.

And again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, written while his wound was fresh:

> As the most forward bud
> Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
> Even so by love the fair and tender wit
> Is turned to folly, blasting in the bud,
> Losing his verdure even in the prime,
> And all the fair effects of future hopes.

There is no dramatic necessity for any of these speeches, and Shakespeare would hardly have penned them if he had not felt that he had missed domestic happiness by disregard of precepts which he afterwards found to be wise. With Milton, Coleridge, and Shelley he must be enumerated among those who have contracted unhappy marriages out of mere precipitancy. No external proof of incompatibility can be given; the estranged pair did not part with or without mutual consent, as in the cases of Shelley and Coleridge, nor did Mrs. Shakespeare convert her husband to the lawfulness and expediency of divorce, like Mrs. Milton. They lived together for a time; twins, a son and a daughter, were born about January 1585; but in the course of that year, as most probable, Shakespeare bade adieu to his family and his native place, neither of which, so far as is known, did he see again for eleven years. Family unhappiness may well have conduced to this exodus, as well as pecuniary embarrassment and the misfortunes of Shakespeare's parents. These reasons

would amply suffice without the deer-stealing adventure in Sir Thomas Lucy's park traditionally related of Shakespeare, which, nevertheless, there is no sufficient reason to disbelieve. We have it on the highly respectable authority of Archdeacon Davies in the seventeenth century that Shakespeare "was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits." A scurrilous ballad against the Lucys, attributed to him, is undoubtedly spurious; but the ridicule of the family in *Henry IV.* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is too palpable to be explained away. It is observable, however, that these attacks are not made until after Shakespeare's return to Stratford, as though the cause of resentment was not so much the original prosecution, now twelve years old, as some fresh affront. The Lucys must have been disagreeably surprised to see the banished poacher returning, and by no means in the guise of the proverbial bad shilling, but rather as gold tried in the fire.

We are now upon the threshold of the most important era of Shakespeare's



Kenilworth Castle in the Seventeenth Century

From a print by Hollar in Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1656

life, the period when his genius took its bent and his subsequent career was virtually determined. To our confusion, these momentous years are an absolute blank for the biographer. Except for one mention of his name in a legal document, there is no trace of him from 1585 to 1592. This at least evinces the vanity of denying him the character of an author on the ground of his imputed want of culture, ignorant as we are what influences may have affected him during this blank interval, or what opportunities of culture may have fallen in his way. But his saner and more responsible biographers also appear to us to err in too readily consenting to suppose him all this time a denizen of London, and for most of it practising the player's art or following some employment of even less social repute. It seems to us certain that he must have seen far more of the world and mingled with associates of a much higher class. Nothing is more remarkable in his earliest productions than their perfect polish and urbanity. The principal characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* are princes and nobles, true to the models which he might have found in contemporary society. The young patricians in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* have in every respect the ideas and manners of their class. The creator of such personages must have been in better company and enjoyed a wider outlook upon society than can easily be believed attainable by an actor or a

resident in a single city. Had this been otherwise, Shakespeare must have winced when he wrote in what, perhaps, was his first play, "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits": but we feel confident that he had "seen the wonders of the world abroad." Three pieces of evidence may be adduced in favour of this opinion: The implied assertion of his adversary Greene, that he had not even in 1592 followed the theatrical profession very long,[1] since in that year, though doubtless with more direct reference to his authorship than to his acting, he calls him "an upstart crow;" the idiomatic ease of the French scenes in *Henry V.*, indicating that he had acquired the language where it was habitually spoken; thirdly, and most important, his familiarity with the moods and aspects of the sea. One passage, in particular, affords, if we do not err, the key to the time and occasion of Shakespeare's foreign travel. It is the passage in the Chorus's speech in the third act of *Henry V.*, describing the departure of a great naval armament:

> Suppose that you have seen
> The well-appointed king at Hampton pier
> Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
> With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.
> Play with your fancies, and in them behold
> Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;
> Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give
> To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails,
> Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,
> Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
> Breasting the lofty surge.

It cannot be believed that the author of these lines had not seen what he describes. Many great fleets sailed from England in Elizabeth's reign, but mostly on distant or dangerous expeditions, in which Shakespeare could not have taken part. There was one memorable exception, and this an expedition in which he might well have been thought to have been concerned, apart from any evidence of acquaintance on his part with Courts, or camps, or navies. In December 1585, Leicester sailed from Harwich at the head of a great force, to assume the government of the United Provinces in their war with Spain. The year is that in which Shakespeare disappears from observation, and in which there is every reason to suppose him to have quitted Stratford. Leicester was the great lord of his part of the country, to whose protection he would naturally have recourse, and to whom it would be easy for him to obtain a recommendation. A band of youths from Warwickshire did, we know, follow Leicester, and few Warwickshire youths can have had more cogent reasons for making one of their number than William Shakespeare. It is not necessary to suppose that his entry into Leicester's service followed immediately upon the deer-stealing adventure. He may well have betaken himself to London, where he would be likely to find at least one friend in a Stratford youth of his own age, Richard Field, son of a tanner at Stratford, and then apprentice

[1] The supposed reference to "W. S." as "the old player" in *Willobie's Avisa* (1594) has no reference to the theatrical profession, but to the part which the person thus designated had sustained in a love-drama of real life.

to the eminent printer Vautrollier, whose daughter he afterwards married, Vautrollier being then an exile in Edinburgh, but still carrying on business in London, his future son-in-law, whose term of apprenticeship had nearly expired, was in a more independent and responsible position than usual with apprentices, and may have been able to give Shakespeare substantial assistance ; and the rather as his master had dedicated books to Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew and associate in his expedition. Certain it is, at all events, that Shakespeare would have eagerly embraced the opportunity of accompany-



The Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon

From a photograph

ing Leicester's expedition if it had presented itself, and there is good reason to think that it actually may have done so. Leicester took a company of actors with him to the Low Countries, and Shakespeare may have been a member of it, but it is quite as likely that he served in some other capacity. Without question the new scene which would open upon him, the magnificent shows and triumphs with which Leicester was received, the view of tented fields and leaguers, the daily talk of war and statecraft, the association with all sorts and conditions of men, would go far to bestow that knowledge of good society, and create that easy and confident attitude towards mankind which appears in Shakespeare's plays from the first, and which (we must concede this much to the Baconians) are so unlike what might have been

expected from a Stratford rustic or a London actor. The opportunities opened up to such a man by a Continental visit in Leicester's train would be infinite: none can say what adventures he may not have experienced, what personages he may not have encountered, or upon what missions he may not have been employed. Some slight and very possibly fallacious indications of acquaintance with widely separate parts of the Continent are nevertheless too interesting to be omitted. Mr. Stefansson (*Contemporary Review*, vol. 69) has, in our opinion, proved that Shakespeare, before writing *Hamlet*, had obtained from some source an intimate knowledge of the Castle of Elsinore. The hypothesis of a personal visit is nevertheless unnecessary, for Leicester sent actors to Copenhagen in 1585, among whom were three who subsequently belonged to Shakespeare's own company, and from whom he might easily obtain any information he desired. Although, however, this supersedes the necessity for Shakespeare's visit, it does not demonstrate that it never took place: and nothing would so well fit in with the long voyage which he certainly must have made at some time or other of his life. The other apparent point of contact between Shakespeare and the Continent is the special knowledge which he seems to possess of Venice. Here, again, there is not sufficient evidence of actual ocular inspection. If, however, Shakespeare ever visited Germany either on a confidential errand or as a member of one of the numerous troops of English actors who at that time ranged the country, it is quite conceivable that the troubled state of France and the Netherlands might compel him to return by way of Venice.



Nicholas Rowe
(The earliest of Shakespeare's editors)
After the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

As already remarked, the existence of a long unknown interval in Shakespeare's life, during which he may have been subjected to influences making for high culture, disposes of the only plausible argument adduced by the advocates of the Baconian authorship of his plays and poems. Even were the case otherwise, it ought to be evident that, whoever the author might

have been, he could not be Bacon. To suppose Shakespeare's dramas, Bacon's philosophy, and Bacon's politics to be the simultaneous operation of a single brain is to credit the human mind with higher powers than it possesses. If Bacon had been the greatest of poets instead of a very middling one, and had, after his disgrace, devoted himself to dramatic literature instead of science, he might conceivably have produced something like Shakespeare's plays; but the idea that such works could proceed *pari passu* with the ponderings of philosophy and the strife of politics shows that the theorist has a very imperfect apprehension of their greatness. It is, moreover, the case that no great lawyer has ever been a great poet. Many great poets have been brought up to the law, but one and all have renounced it as soon as they could, and no eminent lawyer has ever produced a work of high imagination. The productions of Montesquieu and More, which approach most nearly to this character, are, after all, but *jeux d'esprit*. After this it should be superfluous to dwell on the occurrence in the plays of words in the Warwickshire dialect and allusions to Warwickshire local circumstances, or to the unanimous testimony of contemporaries. A word, however, may be devoted to one which we do not remember to have seen brought forward—the impossibility of the Baconian secret being kept. Baconians talk as if Bacon had nothing to do but to write his play at his chambers and send it to his factotum, Shakespeare, at the other end of the town; but nothing can be clearer than that points must have been continually arising requiring consultation with the author, that this author must have lived in a dramatic atmosphere, and been in constant communication with the theatre. That this was really the case is proved by the directions to the players in *Hamlet*. No one, surely, can doubt that the writer of this scene had been in the constant habit of giving instructions to performers. If he were Shakespeare, no question arises; but if he were Bacon? Did he go down to the theatre for the purpose, taking boat or riding over Old London Bridge? or did he drill the players at his chambers? In either case the actors would speedily discover that they were being tutored by the author in person, and the secret would soon be all over the town. There is no escape from this, unless by maintaining that whereas all Hamlet's other speeches are by Bacon, this one is by Shakespeare. Unfortunately, it contains five sentences that have become household words wherever English is spoken.

This particular objection does not apply to the Baconian authorship of the poems and sonnets, which has been maintained with remarkable ingenuity in an anonymous volume by a most accomplished writer—the Rev. Walter Begley. We can only remark that Mr. Begley's case will be much fortified when he is able to produce from Bacon's acknowledged writings lines so instinct with the innermost spirit of poetry as

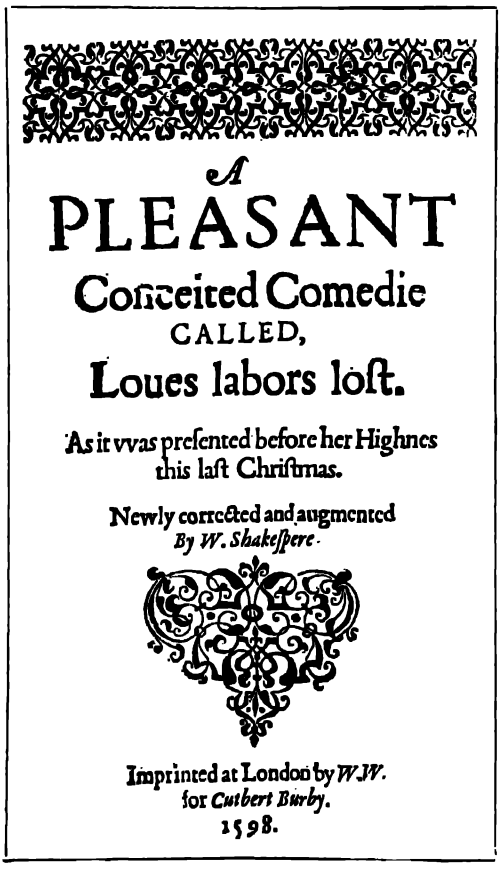
> But that wild music burdens every bough,

or

> Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

Bacon might be deemed capable of composing the speeches of Ulysses but these woodnotes wild!

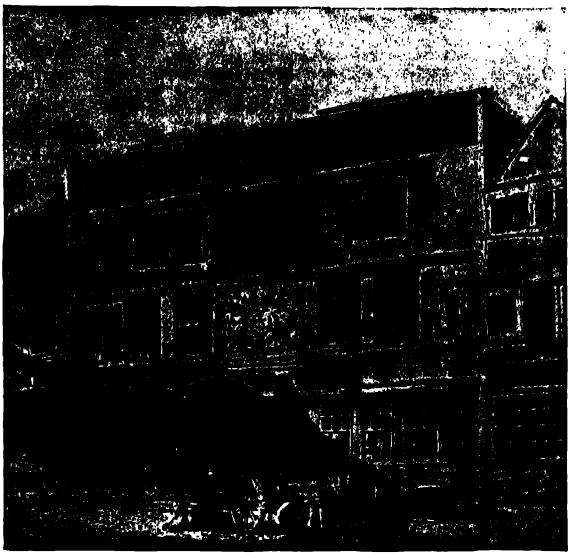
The obscurity which covers Shakespeare's early years during his absence from Stratford is strikingly illustrated by the circumstance that the only affirmation we are able to make respecting them refers not to what he did write, but to what he did not. In his dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton he designates this poem as "the first heir of his invention." If this is to be taken in the most obvious sense, it would appear that he wrote nothing before 1589, for the poem is indebted in several passages to Lodge's *Scilla*, published in that year. It consequently follows that none of his plays can have been written before 1590 at the earliest. How long before this time he had been upon the stage it is impossible to say. The earliest authentic document connecting him with it dates from 1594, but we know from Greene's objurgation that he had obtained much credit by 1592, and had, no doubt, for some time been in a position to insure the representation of anything he might write. The crudity of *Titus Andronicus* has occasioned it to be frequently regarded as his first dramatic effort, but it was produced as a new piece in 1594, under which date Shakespeare's possible share in it will be considered. The first of his plays were undoubtedly the three early comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which must have appeared in 1590–1591, or perhaps in the latter year only. The question of priority among them is hard to settle, but we may concur with Mr. Lee in awarding precedence to *Love's Labour's Lost*. All three indicate that the runaway Stratford youth had within five or six years made himself the perfect gentleman, master of the manners and language of the best society of his day, and able to hold his own with any contemporary writer. All belong to the same period of youth, immature but healthy. In *Love's Labour's Lost* youth is evinced by a prevailing extravagance of diction and ostentation of wit and cleverness, though Shakespeare could even then formulate so sane a maxim as


A
PLEASANT
Conceited Comedie
CALLED,
Loues labors loſt.
As it vvas preſented before her Highnes this laſt Chriſtmas.
Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.
Imprinted at London by W.W.
for Cutbert Burby.
1598.

Title-page of "Love's Labour's Lost," 1598
The earliest existing title-page bearing Shakespeare's name

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it;

and the concluding songs are as finished as anything he ever wrote. In *The Comedy of Errors* youth is exhibited in the constant flow of high animal spirits, the play comes nearer to a farce than any of Shakespeare's except *The Taming of the Shrew*. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is much quieter, but the atmosphere is entirely that of youth's golden romance. All the leading characters are young people, and all act upon impulse, with no sense of responsibility. "Love is too young to know what conscience is." The plot of *Love's Labour's Lost* has not been traced, and may be Shakespeare's invention. The play contains many references to contemporary events in France, alludes to persons known in London life, and satirises contemporary manners generally. The pedant Holofernes, except in so far as he may be a caricature of some country schoolmaster, appears to be compounded out of two characters in Rabelais, another token of Shakespeare's rapid development as a man of letters. The plot of *The Comedy of Errors* is taken from the Menæchmi of Plautus. It might not have been beyond Shakespeare's power to have acquainted himself with this not very difficult play in the original, but there seems some internal evidence of his having used a translation. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is mainly derived from an episode in the Spanish romance of *Diana*, by Jorge de Montemayor: through the medium, as a slight circumstance indicates, of a French version. Of the three dramas, *Love's Labour's Lost*, "a mine of jest and wit and whim," says Platen, is the wittiest, *The Two Gentlemen* the most poetical, *The Comedy* the most humorous. *Love's Labour's Lost* manifests the most intellectual force, but there is more finish and more contrivance in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where the versification is more careful and systematic. Shakespeare seldom wrote a sweeter passage than this:



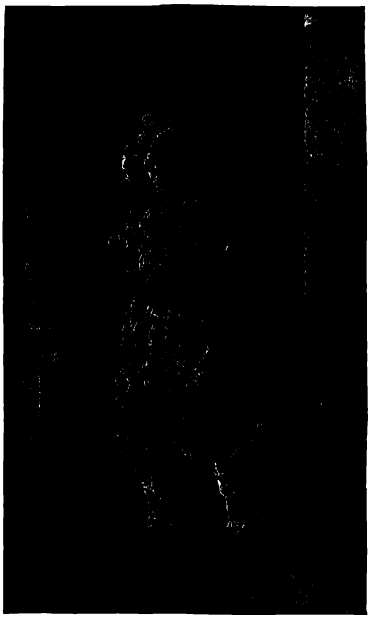
The Fortune Playhouse, Golden Lane
From Wilkinson's "Londinia Illustrata," 1819

The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge

He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,
And so by many winding nooks he strays
With willing sport, to the wild ocëan.

Love's Labour's Lost was acted before the Queen at Christmas 1597, and printed in the following year with revisions, as alleged, by the author. The other two plays appeared for the first time in the Folio of 1623.

These three comedies may be referred with confidence to the years 1590–1591. *Love's Labour's Lost*, at all events, may be supposed to have succeeded well from its revival at Court and from the fact that the title was adapted for another play, *Love's Labour's Won*, mentioned by Meres in 1598, but not extant, unless, as is very likely, it is to be regarded as an early draught of *All's Well that Ends Well*, which is not named by Meres, and is probably later than 1598 in its present form. It would probably be produced soon after the appearance of the play whose title it adapted. Shakespeare was at the same time being introduced to a new sphere of dramatic activity, which found him much occupation for some years. In March 1592 a new piece, called *Henry VI.*, was produced at the Rose Theatre, not by Shakespeare's company, with such success that, according to Nash, writing as a contemporary, it was witnessed at different periods by ten thousand spectators altogether. It is, no doubt, the play included in Shakespeare's works as *The First Part of Henry VI.*, in which, however, few certain traces of his hand can be discovered, insomuch that he is absolved from the charge, so frequently brought against him, of having slandered Joan of Arc. A Second and a Third Part were performed in the summer, and were printed in 1594 and 1595 respectively under the titles of *The Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*. These appear in the Folio as the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.*, with revisions and corrections of sufficient extent to show that Shakespeare regarded the original as mainly his work. It is probable that for some reason unknown the authors of the First Part were cashiered, and that Shakespeare was employed to carry on their work in conjunction with coadjutors identified on slight evidence with Peele and Marlowe. That Greene was one of the discarded playwrights is almost proved by an attack upon Shakespeare in a pamphlet published by him shortly before his death in September 1592, invaluable as the first literary notice of Shakespeare we possess, and an involuntary testimony to the position he had attained.

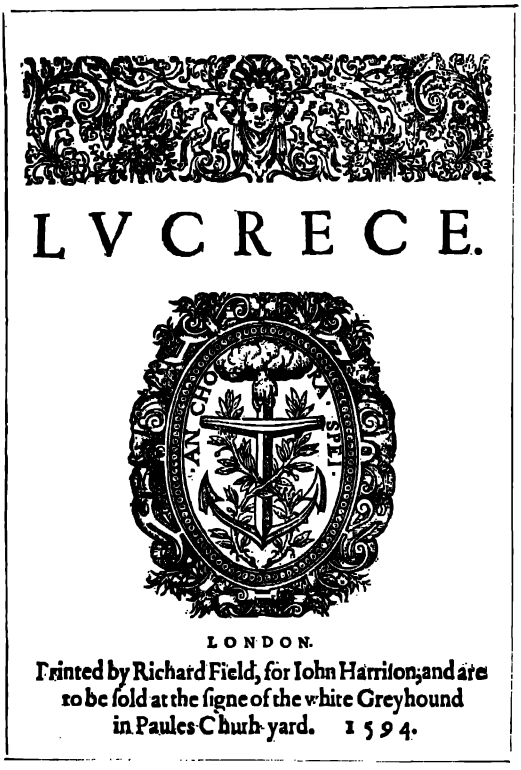


Edmund Kean as Richard III

Addressing three dramatic writers of the day, unnamed, but conjectured to be Peele, Lodge, and Marlowe (who, however, can hardly have been one of them if it be true that passages in the pamphlet relating to him were retrenched as unfit for publication), Greene dissuades them from writing for the stage on the ground that the actors have turned dramatists, and manufacture plays for themselves. "Base-minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you like me sought those burrs to cleave; those puppets, I mean, who speak from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they have all been beholding; is it not like that you, to whom they have all been beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) by both of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified in our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and, being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions." The "tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide" is a parody of a line in the Third Part of *Henry VI.*, showing clearly where the sore lay. As Shakespeare does not appear to have revised the First Part of *Henry VI.* further than by a few insertions of effective lines, it would seem that Greene, probably one of its authors, had designed to continue it, and felt indignant at his work having been put into the hands of another, especially of one whom he regarded as an interloper transgressing the legitimate limits of his own profession. The character of Shakespeare as a "*Johannes Factotum*" attests his versatility, and the commanding position he was gaining as manager no less than as author. Greene's attack was published by Chettle, who made an apology before the end of the year. "I am as sorry," he says, "as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his [Shakespeare's] demeanour to be no less civil than he is excellent in the quality he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art." As "facetious grace" can only refer to comedy, it should seem that the continuation of *Henry VI.* was not regarded by Chettle as principally Shakespeare's work, and that *Romeo and Juliet* had not yet appeared upon the stage.

The parts of *Henry VI.* belong to an imperfect form of drama peculiar to England, "the chronicle play, in which the annals of a reign or period were thrown into a series of loose and irregular metrical scenes." The creation of the historical tragedy is due not to Shakespeare but to Marlowe, who may have been stimulated by the success of *Henry VI.* to show how such tragedies should be written. His *Edward II.* was entered on the Stationers' Register in July 1593, immediately after his death, and printed in 1594. If acted in his lifetime, it must have been performed before February 1593, when the theatres were closed on account of the Plague.

It unquestionably had a strong influence upon Shakespeare's *Richard II.*, probably written in 1593 or 1594, while *Richard III.*, without doubt slightly anterior in date, bespeaks the general influence of Marlowe. The vigour of this stirring play, and the great opportunities which it affords to the actor, have made it one of the most generally known of Shakespeare's productions. The higher intellectual quality of *Richard II.*, evinced in the subtle delineation of the character of Richard, by turns gentle and impassioned, impulsive and introspective, but always deeply pathetic, passed almost unobserved until Coleridge brought it to light. In one piece the playwright is predominant, in the other the poet. Shakespeare's character of Richard II. is a piece of divination; he has seen deeper than the chroniclers, and given us a different Richard from theirs, but a truer one. In *Richard III.* he follows the received account, and makes Richard appear to himself precisely as he appeared to his adversaries. The contrast with his maturer art in *Macbeth* is instructive.


LVCRECE.

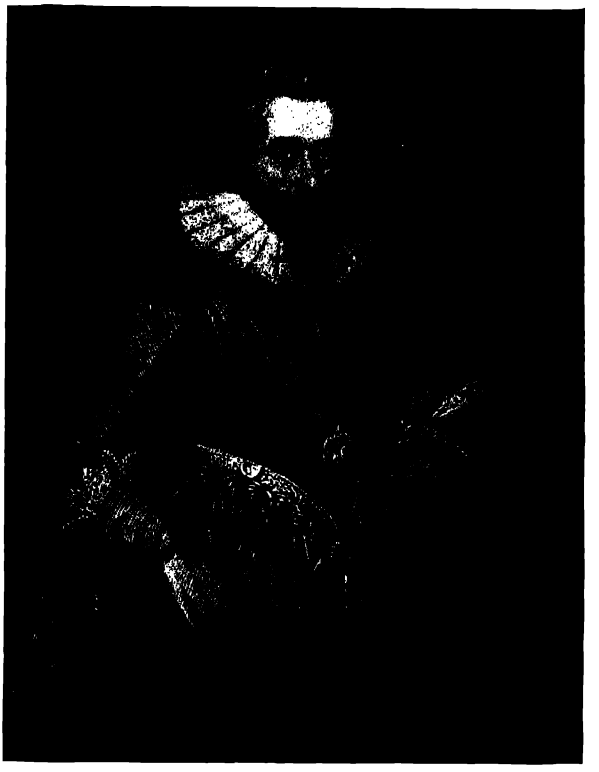
LONDON.
Printed by Richard Field, for Iohn Harrison, and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the white Greyhound in Paules Church-yard. 1594.

Title-page of "Lucrece," 1594 quarto

The year 1593 afforded Shakespeare a respite from the cares of management, the London theatres being closed throughout the whole of it on account of the Plague. His company may very probably have visited the provinces, but even so he would have more leisure than usual. It is characteristic of his mental activity in these days that he should have betaken himself to poetry, for it can hardly be doubted that *Tarquin and Lucrece* was composed between the licensing for publication of his earlier poem, *Venus and Adonis*, in April 1593 and its own licensing in May 1594. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, a youth of twenty, handsome, accomplished, literary, the patron of many poets of his day, but far above all of Shakespeare. The interesting questions raised by the two dedications, and the style of the poems in general, will be best considered along with the *Sonnets*. Shakespeare would have further poetical occupation if he wrote or rewrote *Romeo and Juliet*, which, from the Nurse's allusion to the interval elapsed since the great earthquake, has been thought

to have been begun as early as 1591, but must belong in the main to a more advanced period, while the pervading spirit of youth and the frequency of far-fetched conceits forbid us to place it later than 1593 or 1594, under which latter year we shall consider it.

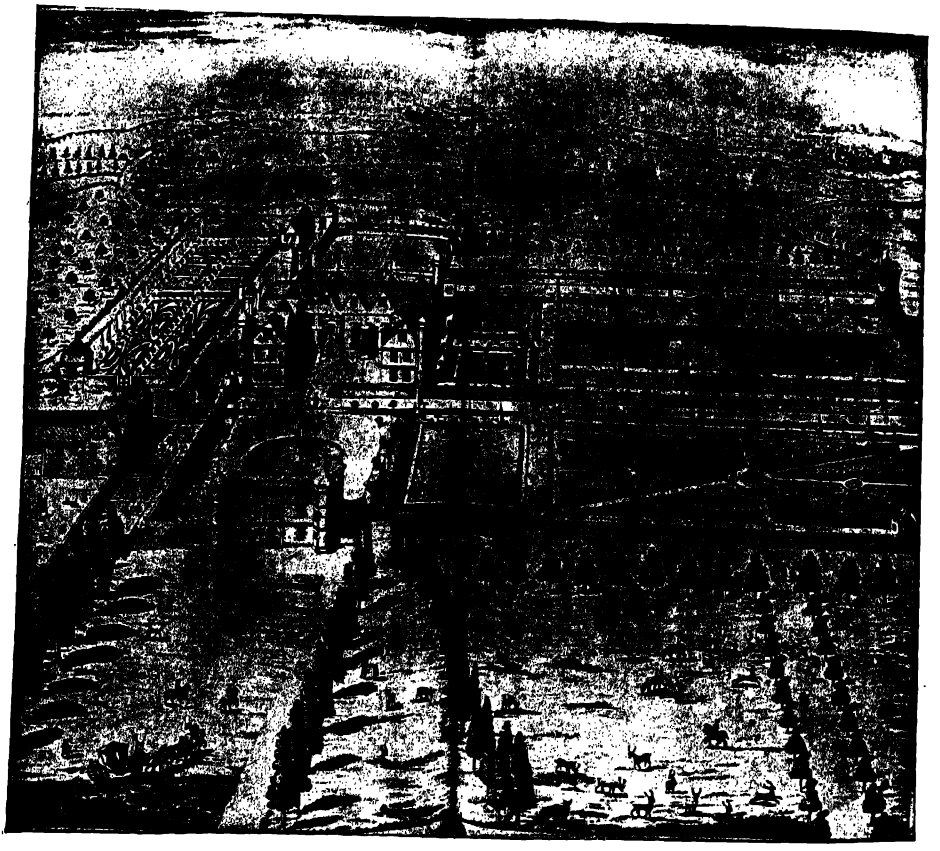
It is an objection to the belief that Shakespeare embraced the profession of an actor immediately upon leaving Stratford, that in that case the atmosphere of the theatre would have allured his first efforts towards the drama. He tells us, however, that "the first heir of his invention" was a poem, the date of which may be fixed with some confidence. The indebtedness of *Venus and Adonis* to Lodge's *Glaucus and Scilla* proves that it cannot have been written before the publication of that poem in the autumn of 1589, while the discrepancy of its style and versification from its successor, *The Rape of Lucrece*, compels us to separate it as far as possible. We may therefore assign it to the beginning of 1590, when Shakespeare had as yet written no plays. *Titus Andronicus* might have seemed to invalidate this observation so long as it passed for an early drama, but although pre-Shakespearean in spirit, it was probably founded upon *Titus and Vespasian*, a play produced in April 1592, and was acted as a new play in January 1594, when Shakespeare would have been incapable of work so exaggerated and inartistic. The external evidence for his authorship, nevertheless, is so strong as to constrain the belief that he had enough of a finger in Andronicus's pie when (having, probably, been kept in abeyance by the closing of the theatres) it was served up to the public as "a new piece," to mislead the judicious Meres into attributing it to him. We are even disposed to think that his share may be discriminated. The conclusion of the fifth act contains two lines which occur with little alteration in Shakespeare's acknowledged writings:



Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton
After the portrait by Mirevelt

Do shameful execution on herself.
But soft, methinks I do digress too much.

The scene, moreover, though devoid of any unquestionable token of Shakespeare's hand, is throughout noble and dignified, and contains nothing unworthy of him. We suspect, therefore, that the play left unfinished by



Charlecote House and Park in the Eighteenth Century
From Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1730

the original writer, or provided with but a "lame and impotent conclusion," was completed by Shakespeare. This would account for the ascription of the drama to him, and agrees with the tradition of his slight participation in it. One is tempted to fancy it a posthumous and unfinished work of Marlowe's. It is hardly more extravagant than *The Jew of Malta*; the scorn which Aaron pours upon religion is very Marlowe-like, and so is his simile of Tamora:

As when the golden sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the Zodiac in his glistering coach,
And overlooks the highest peering hill.

Other choice passages would be worthy of Shakespeare himself, but the style differs :

> Fresh tears
> Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew
> Upon a gathered lily almost withered.

> My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad
> When everything doth make a gleeful boast ?
> The birds chant melody in every bush ;
> The snake lies rolléd in the cheerful sun ;
> The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
> And make a chequered shadow on the ground :
> Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit.

> King, be thy thoughts imperious, like thy name.
> Is the sun dimmed, that gnats do fly in it ?
> The eagle suffers little birds to sing,
> And is not careful what they mean thereby,
> Knowing that with the shadow of his wing
> He can at pleasure stint their melody :
> Even so may'st thou the giddy men of Rome.

We have seen from Chettle's mention of Shakespeare that *Romeo and Juliet* had probably not been acted up to December 1592, and it could not be brought out in 1593 owing to the closing of the theatres. If, therefore, our view of its date is correct, it would be likely to appear upon the stage soon after *Titus Andronicus*. It is needless to say much of a play which has become a household word in every language, but its epoch-making character in many respects may be briefly pointed out. It is the first play in which we meet a true Shakespearean woman, one of those divine creations in which, without having encountered them elsewhere, we devoutly believe, because their perfection in no way oversteps the modesty of nature. Each has her own sphere, within which she is perfect; from another point of view it might be otherwise, but this is never allowed. Juliet's especial grace is the reconciliation of girlish innocence with fiery passion, a difficult feat indeed, but perfectly accomplished. No parents ever blamed Juliet for what they would find highly objectionable in their own daughters. This is the first of Shakespeare's long series of triumphs as a creator of female characters. Julia and Silvia have been charming indeed, but of quite another mould. The play also marks Shakespeare's first great success in comic character apart from plot and situation : Mercutio, a pattern of the more refined department of the art; the Nurse, of the more broadly humorous. If the composition preceded that of *Richard II.*, it also for the first time (if we except Clarence's dream in *Richard III.*) shows his faculty of adorning his dialogue by extraneous poetry. Romeo's description of the Apothecary, and Mercutio's of Queen Mab, might stand by themselves as beautiful poems. The latter may be deemed a precursor of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which we shall assume to have been Shakespeare's next play.

The first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is referred with great probability to December 1594 or January 1595 in virtue of the cumulative

force of two lines of evidence, neither conclusive by itself. The piece has much appearance of having been composed upon occasion of a marriage, and in both December and January occurred the wedding of a person of rank which may well have been thus celebrated. The very minute description of the phenomena of an ungenial summer has all the air of being derived from a recent instance; and the summer of 1594 had been cold and wet beyond precedent. These arguments would not greatly avail if the date were unlikely on critical grounds, but no period in Shakespeare's life fits so well with the degree of artistic and psychological development requisite for the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His power of delineating character and his imagination had still to grow; his fancy had reached its *plus ultra*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he for the first time shows his astonishing power of creating unhuman beings whose works and ways are human in their rationality. Dante and Milton have attempted the same, but in making their fiends reasonable they have made them men. Cardinal Newman and Christina Rossetti in our own day have approached much more nearly to Shakespeare, but they can only exhibit their demons and goblins by glimpses, and a certain taint of the supernatural clings to them. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, and, it may be added, in Goethe's Mephistopheles, there is nothing really supernatural, the exceptional personages are merely beings abnormal from our experience, living under a law of their own. The union in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of three elements so dissimilar as this fairy world, the humours of Bottom and his fellows, and the dignified refinement of Theseus and his court, renders it almost the most delightful of Shakespeare's plays.

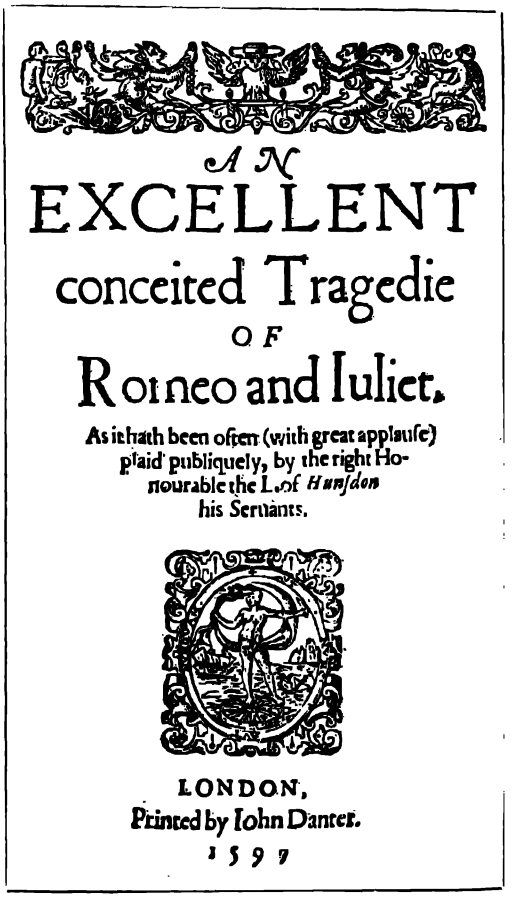


David Garrick and Mrs. Bellamy in "Romeo and Juliet"

Critics have almost unanimously fixed the date of *King John* at from 1594 to 1596. We feel little doubt that it was produced in the summer of 1595. It is manifestly a celebration of Elizabeth's successful defence of her kingdom against Pope and Spaniard, heightened by contrast with the failure of John, and combined with an earnest appeal to the writer's countrymen for patriotic service in the face of pressing danger. This danger can be nothing but the Spanish invasion, the dread of which kept the whole kingdom astir through the greater part of 1595, when the Spaniards actually did effect a landing in Cornwall, and the scene thus vividly depicted was of daily occurrence:

I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers—which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet—
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattailed and ranked in Kent.

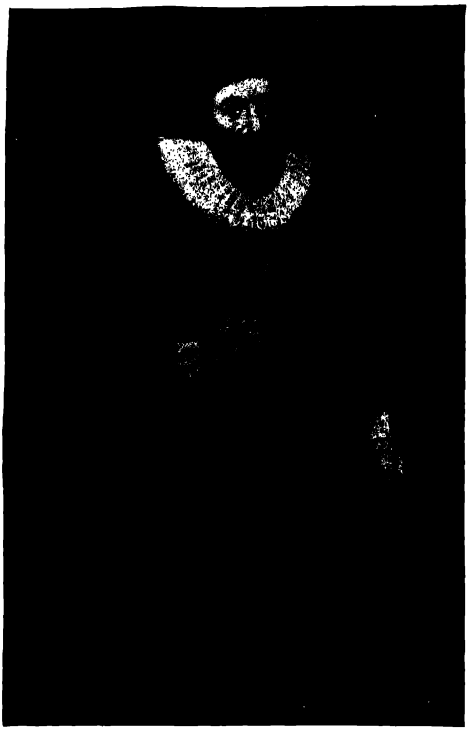
Composed in haste to meet an emergency, *King John* misses many occasions for effective dramatic presentation. More might have been made of the character of John. On the other hand, the play gains in spirit and fire. All its strong points are very strong. Constance is the type of the mother whose world revolves solely upon her son, made selfish and aggressive, and eventually driven to frenzy by the pride and passion of maternal love. Faulconbridge is the ideal John Bull. Arthur's situation is surpassed in pathos by no other in Shakespeare, unless Lear's. The haste with which Shakespeare worked is shown by his dependence on the old drama which afforded him his framework, although he borrows none of its diction; and his alterations evince consummate judgment. One, the omission of a farcical scene offensive to the Church of Rome, has, notwithstanding the obvious tendency of his play, been made an argument to prove him a Roman Catholic. If his good taste is not sufficient reason, it is possible to allege another, prosaic but conclusive. Shakespeare was not the man to quarrel either with his friend or his bread and butter, and his friend and patron, Southampton, was a Roman Catholic at that time.


AN
EXCELLENT
conceited Tragedie
OF
Romeo and Iuliet.
As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of *Hunsdon* his Seruants.
LONDON,
Printed by Iohn Danter.
1597

Title-page of "Romeo and Juliet," 1597 quarto

All's Well that Ends Well and *The Taming of the Shrew* are usually referred to 1595 as an approximate period, but it appears to us that they must have come later. It is commonly believed, and with good reason, that one or the other must have been a later version of the play termed by Meres in 1598 *Love's Labour's Won*. If this version had appeared before 1598 Meres would

surely have mentioned it by its new title; if neither is identical with *Love's Labour's Won*, Meres does not mention either. There is much in both plays suggestive of a later date, and traces of an earlier origin are easily explained by the circumstances that *All's Well that Ends Well* is probably a reconstruction of one of Shakespeare's first pieces, and that *The Taming of the Shrew* is founded upon an anonymous play produced in 1594.



Edward Alleyn, the Actor
After the portrait at Dulwich College

The following year, 1596, is the most likely date for *The Merchant of Venice*, unless Mr. Lee's identification of it with the *Venetian Comedy* acted in 1594 (but not by Shakespeare's company) should be established. The first mention of it is by Meres in 1598. It is needless to dwell upon a play so universally known; nor is it possible sufficiently to praise the enthralling interest of the main action, the art with which the spectator is carried triumphantly over a series of the grossest improbabilities, only remarked in the study, and the deep humanity of Shakespeare's conception of the Jew, too kindred to ourselves ever to forfeit our sympathy, vindictive murderer in intention though he be. Marlowe's Barabas is at hand to show into what a pit a less gifted dramatist and a less genial nature might have fallen.

We have no particulars respecting Shakespeare's private life during this period, except the patronage of Southampton and his summons to act before the Queen in December 1594. The investigations of his biographers have shown that as actor and dramatist he must have enjoyed a considerable income. He cannot, however, have done anything for his father up to at least December 1592, when, in the records of Stratford, John Shakespeare's habitual absence from church, which had led to his being proceeded against as a recusant, is accounted for by his unwillingness to leave home for fear of process for debt. Shakespeare, nevertheless, was so little of a niggard that in 1598 a townsman, Richard Quiney, is found confidently applying to him for a loan of thirty pounds in a sudden strait. It can only be concluded that what seemed an irreparable breach between Shakespeare and his family had been occasioned by the circumstances under which he left Stratford. After 1595,

however, nothing more is heard of the elder Shakespeare's lawsuits and pecuniary troubles, and in October 1596 he is found incurring expense and asserting a higher position than he had previously enjoyed by an application for a coat of arms, which he did not then obtain, but which three years afterwards was discovered to have always belonged to him. This can only have been at the instigation of his son, which implies a thorough reconciliation, and the provision of moneys for urgent occasions. Mr. Lee refers Shakespeare's revisitation of Stratford to 1596, and a most probable motive both for the return and the reconciliation is afforded by the death of his son Hamnet in the August of that year. If so, the story of the Prodigal Son would be reversed, and the little domestic drama between the fortunate but repentant son, the decayed parents to whom he was bringing help and comfort, the faded and long-forsaken wife, and the girls growing up with no knowledge of their father, or trained in disesteem for him, would be as pathetic as any scene in his own works. There would be much to forget and forgive on all sides, but Shakespeare's full acceptance of the situation is shown by the important step he took next year in buying New Place, the largest house in Stratford, for which he gave sixty pounds, or between four and five hundred in our present currency, and which must have involved considerable additional expense in furniture and repairs. A tradition, unauthenticated, but intrinsically probable, of Southampton having assisted him to make a purchase on which he had set his heart, may have reference to this transaction. His desire to obtain a good position in his native county is further evinced by a suit, nominally instituted by his father, to regain the alienated property which had belonged to his mother. It led to no result.



New Place, Stratford-on-Avon, showing the Guild Hall and Chapel and a corner of the Falcon Inn
From Wheler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon," 1806

The time has now arrived to consider the question of the *Sonnets*, in some respects the most interesting of Shakespeare's writings, as they tell us most about himself. The reader need not be informed that it is one of extreme difficulty, to which justice cannot be rendered in our space. Meres, in 1598, names among Shakespeare's works his "sugared sonnets among his private friends." In 1609, Thomas Thorpe, a bookseller, published the collection as we now have it, with a dedication to "Mr. W. H.," whom he describes as "the only begetter" of the pieces, and to whom he wishes "the immortality promised by our ever-living poet." "Begetter" obviously cannot here mean "author," and until lately has been universally considered to mean

"subject." Mr. Sidney Lee, however, has recently contended that it means "procurer," and interprets it of the person by whose instrumentality the *Sonnets* were obtained for publication, whom he plausibly identifies with a certain William Hall. "Begetter" may be used in this sense, but that this is not its signification here is shown by the circumstance that the "begetter" has the poet's, not the publisher's, promise of immortality, no fiction of Thorpe's but made repeatedly in the *Sonnets* themselves. Granted that the appropriation involving the publication, of the MS. of the *Sonnets* was a laudable action, deserving undying fame, how could Shakespeare, writing between 1590 and 1600, foreknow that Mr. William Hall would entitle himself to this renown in 1609? Nothing, to our apprehension, can be clearer than that, since "begetter" cannot denote the writer, it denotes the cause and subject of the poems, the person for whom and upon whom they were written, and but for whom they would not have been written at all; the person to whom Shakespeare made that promise which Thorpe is now about to enable him to redeem. For the identification of "Mr. W. H." we have no other clue than the internal evidence of the *Sonnets* themselves. Five circumstances appear incontestable: that he was a very young man; that he was greatly Shakespeare's superior in rank;[1] that he was a patron of poets, and himself endowed with literary accomplishments; that he was of attractive personal appearance; that his friends greatly desired him to marry. It further appears to us that, with the exception of the group evidently addressed to a woman, all or nearly all were addressed to the same person—a conclusion established, in our opinion, by the prevalent unity of tone, and by the consideration that, had they been inscribed to a number of different persons, no one could have brought them together but Shakespeare himself. In this case they must have been published with his sanction, and he would never have allowed the misdescription of "Mr. W. H." as their "only begetter." Most of the circumstances above named concur in two persons, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of South-



Macklin and Miss Pope as Shylock and Portia in "The Merchant of Venice"

[1] This has been made an objection to the identification of the subject of the *Sonnets* with "Mr. W. H.," it being contended that a person of title would not be addressed as "Mr." Certainly not, if his identity was to be disclosed; but if concealment was desired, such additional disguise would be natural. And if concealment was not intended, why use initials at all?

ampton (born 1573), Shakespeare's especial patron, and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (born 1580), "the greatest Mæcenas to learned men of any peer of his time." The initials "W. H." would serve equally well for either, for, if Southampton were the man, they might well have been transposed for the sake of disguise. It seems almost impossible to doubt that either



William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke

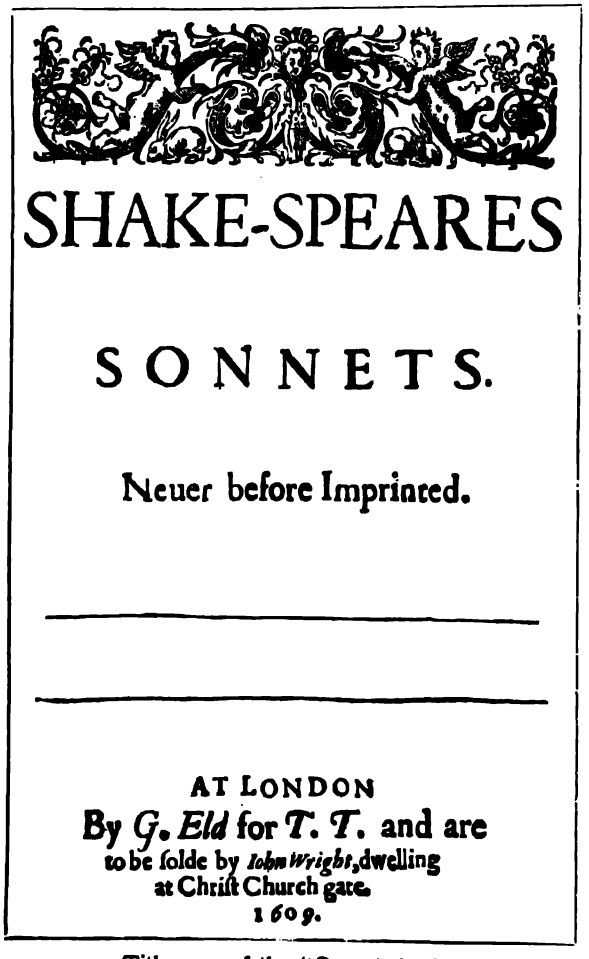
After an engraving of the portrait by D. Mytens

Southampton or Pembroke is indicated when the poet addresses his friend as one who has reason to rejoice at the death of Elizabeth. Both lay under her displeasure: Southampton was in prison, Pembroke banished from Court:

> The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
> And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
> Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
> And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
> Now with the drops of this most balmy time
> My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,

Since, spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

The "mortal moon" is evidently Elizabeth, the Cynthia of the poets of her day. That the "eclipse" is permanent appears from the reference to her successor in the next quatrain. The presages of the augurs are the doubts and fears of statesmen respecting the unfixed succession; the "incertainties" that so significantly *crown* themselves relate to the accession of James; and the "olives of endless age" are a compliment to his pacific policy, which soon brought about peace with Spain. In Elizabeth's time there had been neither peace nor the prospect of it. It seems marvellous that there should have been any question about what is so absolutely transparent. A slighter circumstance not devoid of weight may be pointed out. Elizabeth died on March 24. The "drops of this most balmy time" indicate that the sonnet was written in April. Southampton was liberated from the Tower on April 10, and Pembroke made haste to return to Court. "James," says Mr. Lee, "came to England in a springtide of rarely rivalled clemency, which was reckoned of the happiest augury." We may therefore feel sure that Shakespeare's sonnet is a felicitation to a friend on the new reign, and no possible person but Southampton or Pembroke has been suggested.


SHAKE-SPEARES

SONNETS.

Neuer before Imprinted.

AT LONDON
By *G. Eld* for *T. T.* and are
to be ſolde by *John Wright*, dwelling
at Chriſt Church gate.
1609.

Title-page of the "Sonnets," 1609

The sonnet would certainly appear to fit the imprisoned Southampton better than the merely disgraced Pembroke, though it would suit either. There are, nevertheless, serious objections to the identification of Southampton

with the subject of the poems. It is an almost fatal impediment to his claim that there is no record of his having been urged to marry, except at seventeen, which would correspond to 1590, an impossible date for the *Sonnets*. After 1594 there could be no question, at least no question raised by an intimate friend, of his marrying any one but Elizabeth Vernon, with whom he had an amour, and the poet's arguments are not of the kind that could be used to persuade a man to marry his mistress. The entire tone of the *Sonnets*, indeed, is so inconsistent with the probable relations of Shakespeare and Southampton after 1594 that the advocates of the Southampton theory are obliged to assign to them a date too early for their reach of thought and poetical power. Even thus a formidable difficulty arises. There is a remarkable difference between the tone of the dedications of the two poems inscribed by Shakespeare to Southampton. The formality of the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) is inconsistent with the feeling displayed in the *Sonnets*, with which the warmth of the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) would accord very well. It is therefore maintained that the majority of the *Sonnets* were composed in 1594; but it seems impossible that either so much could be written in so short a time, or so much variety of psychical experience lived through. Shakespeare, moreover, says (Sonnet CIV.) that he had first seen his friend three years previously, and implies, though he does not expressly state, that their attachment had kept pace with their acquaintance. If it had been formed in 1591, the formality of the dedication of 1593 remains unexplained. Sonnet LV., moreover, apparently alludes to a passage in Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, in which case it must be later than September 1598, when Meres's book was registered for publication.



Mrs. Abingdon as Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing"

No such difficulties beset Pembroke, whose friends were in August 1597 most desirous to marry him to a grand-daughter of the all-powerful Burleigh. It must be supposed that Shakespeare became acquainted with his friend, whoever he was, at the time when marriage was being pressed upon him, for the stream of thought in the *Sonnets*, beginning with half-earnest conceits and gaining volume and intensity as it proceeds, shows the order to be mainly chronological, and the note of marriage is struck in the very first line:

From fairest creatures we desire increase.

As has been stated, this pressure was put upon Pembroke in August, and was, no doubt, continued for some time. Shakespeare appears to say that his acquaintance with his friend commenced at the beginning of winter, for he puts the fall of the leaf first among the natural phenomena which succeeded it:

> Three winters cold
> Have from the forests shook three summers' pride;
> Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
> In process of the seasons have I seen;
> Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned
> Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.

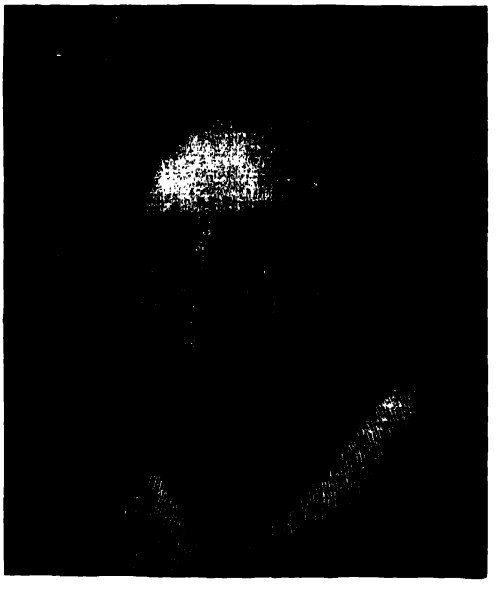
In Sonnet XCVII. he deplores his absence from his friend in the autumn, and in Sonnet XCVIII. another absence in April. If these sonnets were addressed to Southampton in 1594, Southampton must have been absent from town in the spring and autumn, but of this there is no evidence, and it would reduce the time available for the composition of the *Sonnets*, upon this theory too short already. But we have positive proof of the absence of Pembroke at both these seasons—in September 1599, when he was called into the country by the illness of his father, and in April 1601, when he was imprisoned for his transgression with Mistress Fitton; though we do not press this latter circumstance, as Shakespeare himself appears to have been the absentee. One further indication may be given of the *Sonnets* not having been composed earlier than 1597. In Sonnet LXVI. Shakespeare, among the miseries that make him wish for death, enumerates "Art made tongue-tied by Authority." What art? Clearly his own, Poetry, especially dramatic poetry. Painting, Sculpture, and Music are evidently out of the question. In 1597 there had been two interferences of Authority with this art which must have touched Shakespeare very nearly. In August 1597 a brother dramatist, Thomas Nash, was visited with a long imprisonment for political allusions in a play entitled *The Isle of Dogs*, and Henslowe's theatre was closed for a time. In the same year Shakespeare's own *Richard II.* had to be printed without the deposition scene, which must be supposed to have been omitted from the performance also. The special occasion which extorted the complaint in the sonnet may have been the destruction of Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*, and of Marston's *Pygmalion*, by order of the Archbishop in 1599.



Elliston as Falstaff in Henry IV.

We, therefore, conclude that, while the *Sonnets* were certainly addressed for the most part either to Southampton or to Pembroke—and Southampton is not entirely out of the question—the evidence derived from dates and the

general character of the poems greatly preponderates in Pembroke's favour. All will allow their superiority to the narrative poems in intellectual maturity as well as in poetical expression. The lower their date can be reasonably carried the better. We do not doubt that most are posterior to 1597, while probably none can be dated after 1603. It may be added that the general tone of address is more appropriate to a stripling like Herbert, as yet only heir to a peerage, than to Southampton, who, although a youth, had for years been a peer of the realm. It is unlikely that Shakespeare would have termed his patron "fair friend" and "sweet boy." Some difficulties, no doubt, remain. There is no direct proof of any connection between Herbert and Shakespeare, nor does he appear to have been remarkably handsome, as Southampton was. But if the prosperity of a jest lies in the ear that hears it, so may that of a countenance in the eye that beholds it. The "dark lady" group of sonnets (CXXVII–CLII). relates to some critical circumstance in Shakespeare's life, of which we know no more than that it must have occurred before 1599, when two of them were printed. We do not think that the man referred to in them is the same person as the subject of the other sonnets; if he were, this would be an argument for Pembroke, as he christian-name was evidently William. Sonnet CXLV., which is not a sonnet, is entirely out of place.



Richard Burbage
After the portrait at Dulwich, attributed to himself

We have left ourselves no space to comment upon the poetical merit of the *Sonnets*, nor is it needful. While some, no doubt, are mere exercises of ingenuity, many more in depth of emotion and splendour of imagery surpass any kindred compositions in the language. That there should have been a time when they were slighted and contemned seems now like a bad dream. This was the eighteenth century, but in Shakespeare's own age they were far from enjoying the esteem accorded to his narrative poems, which ran through edition after edition, and in the eyes of most, eclipsed even his plays. It is as the epical, not the dramatic poet that he is celebrated upon his monument. To our age these poems appear very admirable as galleries of glowing pictures, and not devoid of striking thoughts, but tedious from over-elaboration, and strangely deficient in pathos, the moving nature of the themes considered. This is probably owing to the deliberate matter-of-fact way in which the poet goes about his task, upon which Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Dowden

have commented. The *Sonnets*, so long neglected, have in our own day called forth more criticism and speculation than any other of Shakespeare's works, except *Hamlet*. The comments of Professor Dowden, Mr. George Wyndham, and Mr. Thomas Tyler are most valuable, though we cannot subscribe to the last-named writer's views on the minor detail of Mistress Fitton.

The purchase of New Place, the outward and visible sign of Shakespeare's victory over the world, aptly ushers in the most sunny and genial, though not the most marvellous epoch of his dramatic production. The *First Part of Henry IV.*, licensed for the press in February 1598, must have been written and acted in 1597. The Second Part and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, satellite of the historical dramas, cannot have been long delayed. There are perhaps none of his productions in which Shakespeare is so thoroughly at home, and from which so lively an impression may be derived; not, indeed, of the man in his profounder moods, but of the man as he appeared to his fellows. If critics are right, as no doubt they are, in recognising in Hamlet and Troilus the influence of a period of gloom and sadness, the creation of Falstaff must denote one of genial jollity, such as might well be induced by the victory in the battle of life signalised by his installation in his native town. In full keeping with this feeling is the fact that the second part contains many local allusions, including a reference to a peculiar agricultural custom in the Cotswolds, alone sufficient to prove that the play was written by one acquainted with the locality. The serious portion of the plot is but moderately interesting, but it is handled with an easy power which would excite still more admiration if it were not so completely overtopped by the humour of Falstaff. There seems no doubt that Falstaff was originally called Oldcastle, from which it has been absurdly argued that Shakespeare intended to attack the Reformation. If he had had any such design he would have made Falstaff a Puritan.



Mrs. Woffington as Mrs. Ford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"

Henry V. is in some respects a more extraordinary production than *Henry IV.*, for it shows what Shakespeare could make of a subject so undramatic that it might well have been deemed intractable. The date and purpose of the play are proclaimed by itself in the speech of the Chorus celebrating Essex's expedition to Ireland in the early part of 1599. It must be regarded, like *King John*, as a dramatic improvisation designed to animate and guide public feeling. *King John* has a highly dramatic subject, *Henry V.* is better adapted for epic. Its tone, therefore, is lofty and epical, befitting the grandeur of the momentous, if undramatic, action, and it is sown

with passages of majestic eloquence and brilliant poetry, while the comic personages, our old acquaintances, retain their original humour. The dissolute Prince Hal has become the ideal of a warrior king, and, designedly or undesignedly, affords no inapt symbol of Shakespeare's own transformation from the youth "given to all unluckiness" into the first burgess of his native place and the first author of his age.



Richard Tarleton, a comedy actor of Elizabeth's time
From an old print

Shortly after the broad humour of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare passes to a totally different type of comedy, the poetical and romantic. Perhaps no department of his work was so absolutely congenial to him, for none so entirely reconciled the graver and the lighter qualities of his mind. In beginning his career as a dramatist, he had turned to it as it were by instinct, for one of his earliest works, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is an example of it, and one of extraordinary merit considering his age. He now, in the prime of his strength, produces three masterpieces, *Much Ado about Nothing* (1598 or 1599), *As You Like It* (1599 or 1600), and *Twelfth Night* (1600). Of these, *Much Ado about Nothing* is the least delightful, shadowed by the villainy of Don John and the unchivalrous behaviour of Claudio; but Benedick, Beatrice, and Dogberry make amends. *As You Like It* is the most thoroughly delightful play that Shakespeare ever wrote, and Rosalind perhaps deserves the palm among all his female creations. The Forest of Arden is as purely an ideal world as that of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Tempest*, and owes nothing of its ideality to the supernatural. It is perhaps the most remarkable instance that poetry affords of an ideal creation out of purely human elements. If *Twelfth Night* is less enchanting, it is merely because the Illyrian city cannot have the romantic charm of the forest, nor can Viola reproduce the unique flavour of Rosalind, nor can she have a foil

in Celia. But if less exceptional, the character is not less exquisite, and touches the feelings more deeply; the subordinate personages are even more humorous; and the action is balanced with the nicest skill on the limits between gay and grave. It is remarkable that among the materials for his plot Shakespeare takes up the Spanish romance from which he had derived *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and uses the part which he had then rejected.

The cheerful character of Shakespeare's dramatic work towards the close of the century was promoted not merely by his restitution to Stratford, but by the general prosperity of his affairs. In 1599 the brothers Burbage built the Globe Theatre in Bankside, and allotted shares in the receipts to some of the more distinguished performers, among whom Shakespeare is mentioned. The amount he would probably receive, including his salary as actor, has been estimated at £500 in the money of the period, out of which he would have to contribute his share towards the expenses of the theatre. Remuneration for his dramatic writings and extra emoluments from performances at Court and at private mansions would increase his income, which may be fairly estimated at £600 a year. His was one of the natures with which prosperity agrees, and we may see thankfulness and satisfaction reflected in his work. This complacency, nevertheless, was mainly the creation of outward circumstances. It was not yet based upon philosophy allied to experience, and resulting in that large, liberal, tolerant view of life of which his latest writings show him in possession. Ere this could be his, he had yet, to all appearance, to traverse a tempestuous inward crisis. Meanwhile the century, for him, closed in peace.

CHAPTER VI

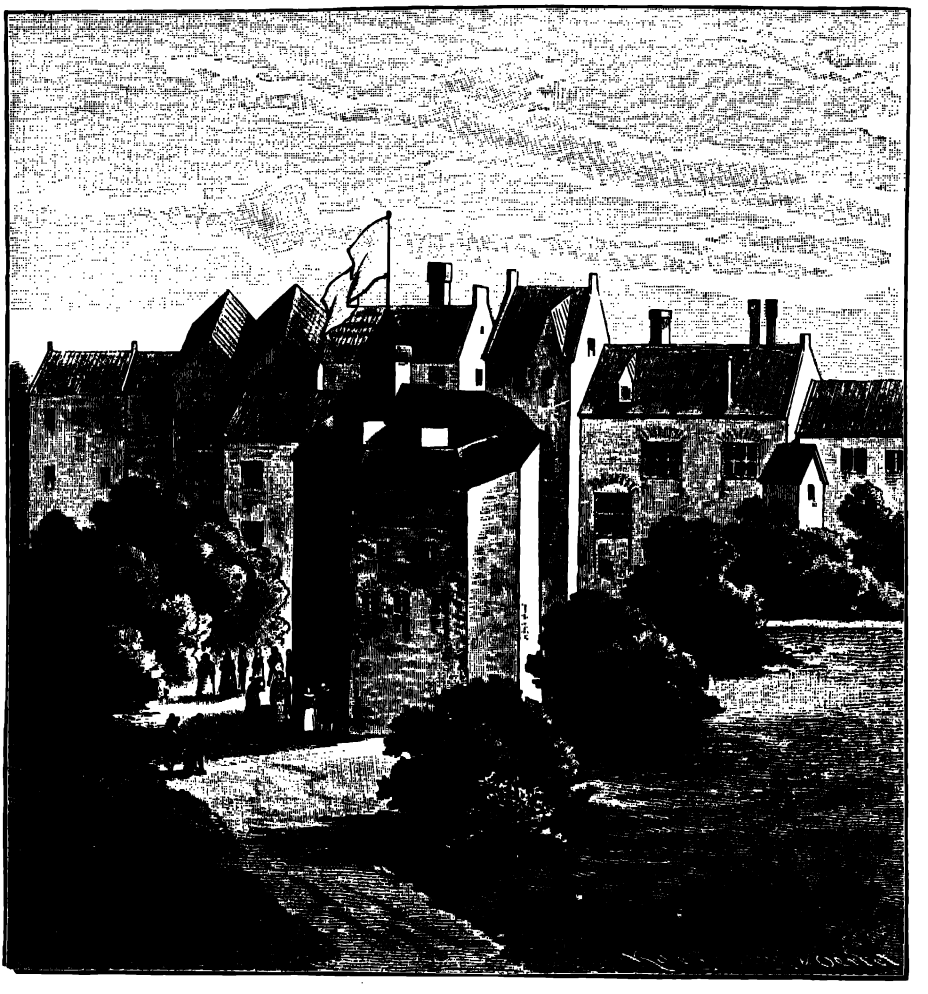
SHAKESPEARE—(*continued*)

If the sixteenth century had closed brightly for Shakespeare, the seventeenth began in cloud and storm. His own position may not have been affected, but he must have suffered deeply with his patron and his friend. We have seen him celebrating Essex's Irish expedition in *Henry V.*, and promising that the hero should return, "bearing rebellion broached upon his sword." Things had turned out far otherwise. Falling from one disaster to another, Essex, in February 1601, was goaded into the mad attempt at revolution which brought him to the scaffold, and his ally Southampton, Shakespeare's friend and Mæcenas, to the Tower. In the same month, Pembroke, the subject, as we have contended, of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, incurred, like Raleigh before him, the Queen's displeasure by an intrigue with a maid of honour. He was imprisoned and banished the Court. It has already been remarked that the month of his imprisonment corresponds with the month of April during which Shakespeare laments his severance from his friend. We are nevertheless not disposed to connect the circumstances, as Shakespeare seems to write as one who has himself been absent in the country. The date of the absence may with probability be conjectured from the first four lines of Sonnet XCVIII.:

> From you have I been absent in the spring,
> When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
> Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
> That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.

Saturn may be merely a poetical synonym for Time; but if, as is more probable, the planet Saturn is denoted, he certainly is not introduced at random. Mr. George Wyndham has most ingeniously surmised a reference to the peculiar brilliancy of Saturn when in opposition to the sun, and thus at his greatest possible distance. The sun in April is in Aries and Taurus, and to be in opposition to him Saturn must be in Libra or Scorpio, as actually was the case at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. This acute observation may be reinforced by another derived from the kindred study of astrology. Libra is astrologically the *exaltation* of Saturn, one of the signs in which he is supposed to be most potent. He may therefore with great propriety be said to "laugh and leap" in it. He was in Libra and opposed to the sun in the April of 1599 and 1600. The latter date would agree best with the general chronological scheme of the *Sonnets*.

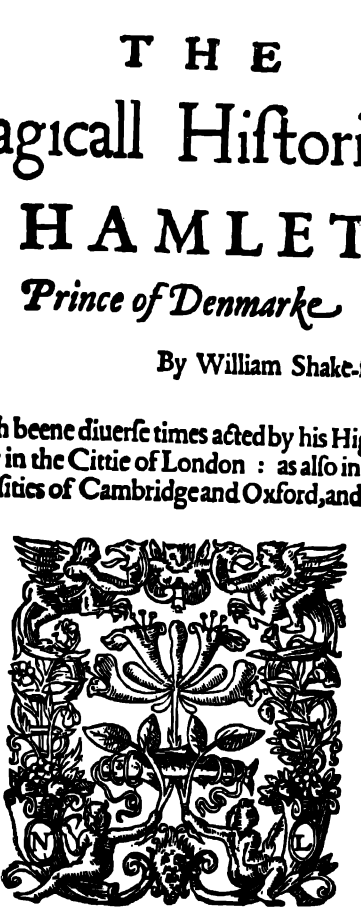
It is an interesting speculation whether the conspiracy of Essex contributed to direct Shakespeare's attention to the conspiracy of Brutus as the subject of his next play. There can be little doubt that *Julius Cæsar* appeared in 1601, for it is alluded to in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, published in that year, and it seems out of keeping with the plays of 1599–1600. Professor



The Globe Theatre at Southwark
From a drawing in the British Museum

Dowden has pointed out its intellectual affinity to *Hamlet*, a drama of the succeeding year. In resorting to Plutarch for a subject, Shakespeare was merely repeating the procedure with the English chroniclers which had answered so well in his English historical plays, but he had now to deal with material already sifted by a masterly hand. It was not the especial business of the English chroniclers to record noble actions: they relate the history of the times with fidelity, and take things noble or ignoble as they come.

But Plutarch's *Lives* are eclectic; his aim is to preserve what is really memorable in a strictly human point of view, and in so doing he gives it so admirable a form that Shakespeare himself cannot improve upon it. Many, therefore, of the most striking traits and sayings in *Julius Cæsar* are taken directly from his biographies of Cæsar and Brutus. Referring back from the poet to the biographer, we find continually how what has most impressed and charmed us belongs to Plutarch. An inferior writer would have attempted to heighten or refine upon his original. Shakespeare never alters what he knows cannot be improved. Where, however, he sees his opportunity, he fairly carries Plutarch away in his talons. The finest scenes in the play, scenes which Shakespeare himself never surpassed—the oratory and tumult at the funeral of Cæsar and the dispute between Brutus and Cassius—are developed from the merest hints. With exquisite judgment, these grand displays of eloquence and passion are reserved for the part of the play that requires them. The first half, full of incident and character, needs no embellishment; but after Cæsar's death the interest would flag but for these potent reinforcements. In another respect Shakespeare is very dependent upon Plutarch—the delineation of character. He has not to do here with rude faint outlines, like the traditional Macbeth or the traditional Lear, but with portraits painted after authentic history by the hand of a master. These


THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET
Prince of Denmarke

By William Shake-ſpeare.

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſeruants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two Vniuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where

At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell.
1603.

Title-page of the First Quarto of "Hamlet"

From the only extant copy, in the library of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth. (Reproduced from Mr. Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare" by permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.)

he follows religiously. It hence comes to pass that in the character of Brutus he has made a nearer approach than anywhere else to drawing a perfect man, for Plutarch will have it so. "In all Brutus's life," says Plutarch, after recording one undeniable blot, "there is but this one fault to be found," and Shakespeare's Brutus is equally perfect ethically, save for his requiring Cassius's prompting to do what he should have resolved upon by himself. Professor Dowden justly points out the analogy with Hamlet. The very perfection of Brutus's moral nature renders him inefficient intellectually; he cannot condescend to the sphere of an unscrupulous man of the world like Antony, and Antony beats him from the field. This, of course, is also in Plutarch, but Plutarch does not show, as Shakespeare does, the necessary connection of Brutus's moral nobility with his intellectual failings. The other personages are depicted as in Plutarch, but with much greater vividness. The subordination of Cæsar's part has been censured, but appears inevitable. Had Cæsar been a more prominent character he must have been represented in personal relation to Brutus, inimical or benevolent. If the former, suspicion must have been cast upon the disinterestedness of Brutus's patriotism; if the latter, he would have been open to the charge of ingratitude.

There is an interesting indication that Shakespeare read other lives of Plutarch than those he dramatised, and even before he had written *Julius Cæsar*. Cæsar says to Antony, wishing to elicit his opinion of Cassius:

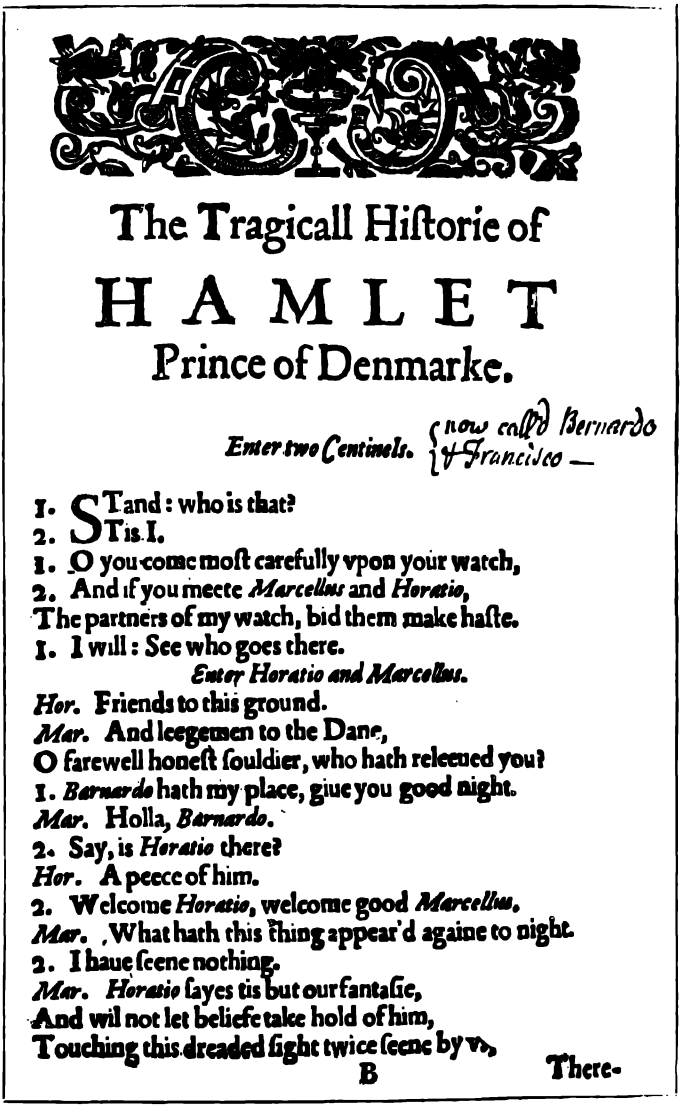
> Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
> And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

Cæsar is nowhere represented as deaf, but the idea seems borrowed from Plutarch's statement, in his life of Alexander the Great, that Alexander "always used to lay his hand upon one of his ears to keep that clean from the matter of accusation."

On the whole, save for defects inherent in the subject, *Julius Cæsar* is perhaps as perfect a work as the dramatist's art is capable of producing. That perfection and power are not convertible terms appears from the undeniable fact that Shakespeare's next production, though imperfect in structure and full of puzzling riddles, has affected mankind far more deeply and exhibits qualities far more exceptional. This play is *Hamlet*.

The stage history of *Hamlet* is remarkable. It is entered on the Stationers' Register in 1602 as a piece lately acted. In 1603 a quarto edition appeared containing not more than about three-fifths of the play as republished in the following year. In the earlier edition Polonius is called Corambis, and there are many discrepancies in language and in the arrangement of scenes and speeches. It is a highly interesting question whether the first edition was printed after an imperfect or an acting copy, or possibly taken down in shorthand during the performance, or whether Shakespeare himself revised and enlarged his drama. The former seems the more probable supposition; although even the second edition, described as "printed from the only true

and perfect copy," wants several passages found in the folio of 1623, though this again has various signs showing that it was abridged for the stage. These may have been retrenched owing to the length of the play, or may have been subsequent additions. We feel that *Hamlet* expresses more of Shakespeare's inner mind than any other of his works, and is the most likely of any to have been subjected to close revision. One trifling circumstance indicates revision, the alteration of *twelve* years, given in the First Quarto as the period for which Yorick's skull had been interred, to *twenty-three* upon Shakespeare's remarking that he had made Hamlet a man of thirty.



The Tragicall Hiſtorie of

HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke.

Enter two Centinels. {now calld Bernardo & Francisco —

1. STand: who is that?
2. 'Tis I.
1. O you come moſt carefully vpon your watch,
2. And if you meete *Marcellus* and *Horatio*,
The partners of my watch, bid them make haſte.
1. I will: See who goes there.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Hor. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And leegemen to the Dane,
O farewell honeſt ſouldier, who hath releeued you?
1. *Barnardo* hath my place, giue you good night.
Mar. Holla, *Barnardo*.
2. Say, is *Horatio* there?
Hor. A peece of him.
2. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus*.
Mar. What hath this thing appear'd againe to night.
2. I haue ſeene nothing.
Mar. *Horatio* ſayes tis but our fantaſie,
And wil not let beliefe take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded ſight twice ſeene by vs,

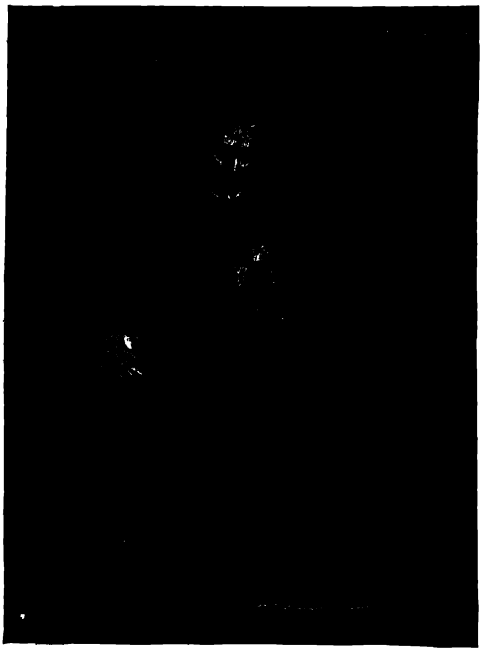
B There-

The opening page of the First Quarto of "Hamlet"

From the copy (wanting the title-page) in the British Museum

Another interesting question is the relation of Shakespeare's drama to an older play. From an allusion of Thomas Nash we learn the existence in 1589 of a play on the subject of *Hamlet*, in which a ghost appeared crying "Revenge!" The theme may well have been suggested by the English actors lately returned from Copenhagen, and, perhaps, were the play now extant, the origin of Shakespeare's remarkable acquaintance with the topography of Elsinore might be ascertained. It has been attributed with much probability to Thomas Kyd. It was acted again in 1594, and must have been well known to Shakespeare, who, no doubt, took from it the idea of Hamlet

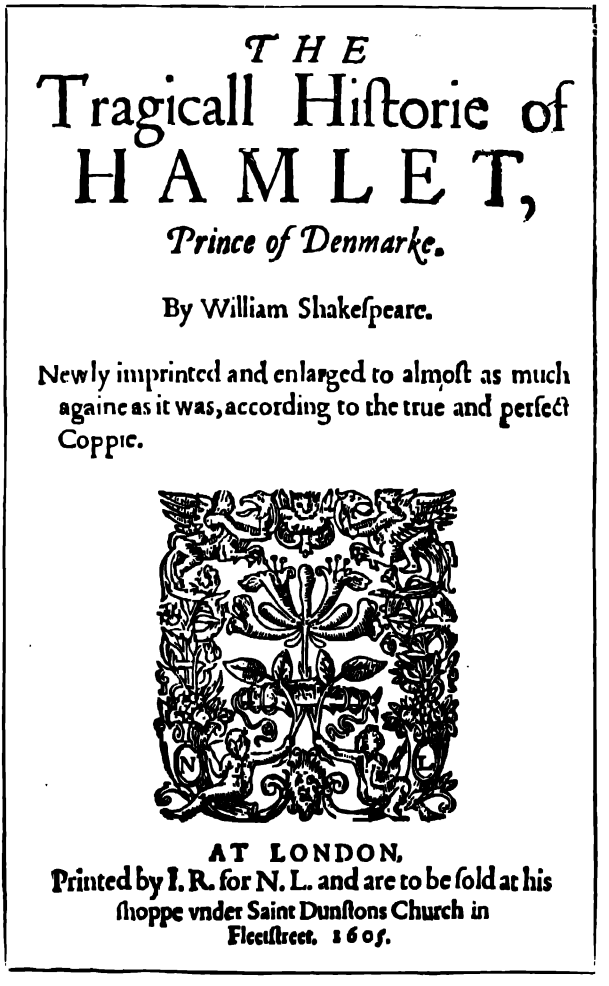
as a dramatic subject. It would be of service to him by bringing together the Hamlet legend as related by Saxo Grammaticus and the version of it in the novel of Belleforest. Apart from this, we cannot believe that he adapted it, or that any considerable trace of it would be found in his work. It may even be that he has unkindly burlesqued his predecessor in the Player's bombastic speech about "the rugged Pyrrhus": but Hamlet's apology for the lukewarmness of Polonius's appreciation suggests that Marlowe, the declared adversary of "jigging veins," was the butt of the parody.



Fechter as Hamlet

Hamlet is Shakespeare's most wonderful play, and the most famous, but, regarded as a drama, it is not the best. The action is loose and inartistic, there is no logical sequence in the incidents; the moral might almost seem to be that life is a chance medley, and that the high resolve of the avenger and the sagacious plotting of the usurper are alike at the mercy of trivial accidents. Given the situation and the character of an Othello or a Macbeth, we foresee the issue, but no reader or spectator of *Hamlet* for the first time could tell whether Hamlet's vengeance was to be accomplished or not. It seems as though Shakespeare, having written so much for Art's sake, determined at last to write something for his own, and made *Hamlet*, as Goethe made *Wilhelm Meister*, a vessel into which he could put his views and observations of men and things. It is noteworthy that it is much the longest of his plays; that in no other, unless *The Tempest* be an exception, does a single character so completely dominate the action; and that nowhere is such an amount of speaking imposed upon a leading personage. These are, no doubt, among the chief sources of its popularity, to which may be added the wonderful perfection of individual scenes considered by themselves; the truth and depth of the characters, not one of which but has some strong and original trait; above all, the sense of mystery, vagueness, and the gazing, as it were, upon a vast and remote horizon. In fact, *Hamlet* is more nearly akin to *Faust* than to Shakespeare's other tragedies, and the main idea, so well pointed out by Goethe, of a noble and tender spirit sinking beneath the load of a duty which it cannot perform, is almost buried in the multitude of minor issues. The question of Hamlet's madness has been much debated. We feel no doubt

that it is real, though never amounting to lunacy, and that the actual taint of insanity in his mind makes the simulation of it much the easier to him. It is one of the finest points of dramatic irony in the play that the deception, as he deems it, by aid of which he desires to compass his revenge, is turned against himself when his uncle, with perfect justification, as must have seemed to all, makes it the ostensible reason for banishing him. There is much of the cunning of the madman in his trick upon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which a sane man would not have carried to such length, as it would have sufficed to destroy the letter.


THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakeſpeare.

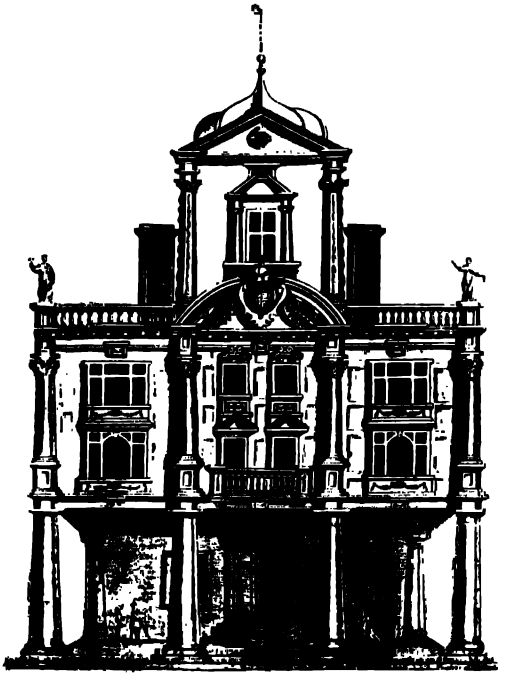
Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1605.

Title-page of the 1605 "Hamlet"

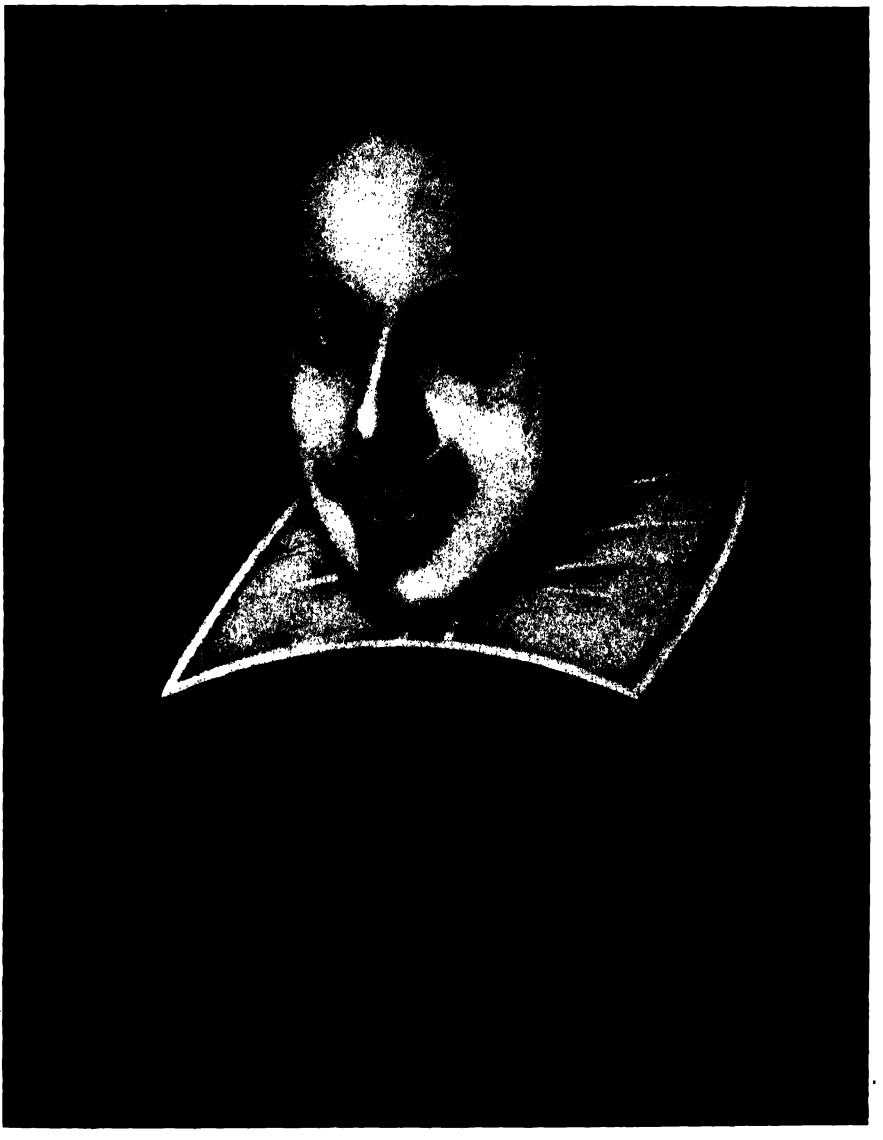
The unsatisfactory nature of human life is by no means an established article of Shakespeare's creed. For some years after the performance of *Hamlet* we find him composing under the influence of more serious feeling than of old, producing tragedy by preference, but if comedy, comedy devoid of the brightness and lightness of heart that has characterised his comedy until now. But in only one piece after *Hamlet* is the view presented of human life as a whole thoroughly pessimistic. Tragic incidents are selected for treatment, but human nature and human society are never, save once, represented as rotten at the core. This one exception is the play which there is good reason to believe next followed *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*. Some circumstance must certainly have been at work to derange the inner harmony of Shakespeare's being, and as the heroine of his new play is the byword for female inconstancy, the presumption is very strong that this was connected with the passion of love. It would be natural to interpret it by the history of the Dark Lady adumbrated in the second

series of the *Sonnets;* but this is out of the question, for two of them had been published in Jaggard's *Passionate Pilgrim* as early as 1599. If connected with any episode in the *Sonnets*, it is most probably with the incidents, whatever they may have been, which led him in Sonnet CXIX. to speak of his love as "ruined," even if "built anew." As these sonnets evidently belong to the latest group of those addressed to his friend, 1602 would be a very probable date, and there is strong reason to believe that this was the year in which *Troilus and Cressida* was written. The literary history of the play, however, is as perplexing as the play itself. In 1599 Dekker and Chettle wrote a drama on the subject, with which a contemporary satirist seems to have imagined that Shakespeare had some concern. In February 1603 a piratical publisher obtains a licence to print "the book of *Troilus and Cressida* as it is acted by my Lord Chamberlain's men," Shakespeare's company. When, however, the play is at length printed by another publisher about February 1609, it is stated never to have been performed, while other copies of the same edition declare it to have been acted at the Globe. The simplest way of reconciling these conflicting statements is to suppose that the play had not, in fact, been acted when the publication was first licensed, but that the licensee, knowing that it was in preparation, took the liberty to anticipate; that some cause, possibly the death of Elizabeth, prevented its production; that the statement made early in 1609 that it had never been represented was true at the time, but had to be retracted when the play was actually brought out. In any case, the evidence of diction and versification speaks for 1602–3.



The Duke's Theatre, Dorset Gardens
From Wilkinson's "Londinia Illustrata," 1819

In *Troilus and Cressida*, even more than in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare has set himself to exhibit "the seamy side of things." In *Hamlet* the repulsiveness is almost cancelled by the splendour of the poetry, the depth of the problems suggested, and the surpassing interest of the principal character. In *Troilus and Cressida* there is nothing of this. Shakespeare disdains the magnificent materials which lay to his hand, and seems to take pleasure in degrading his theme, in compelling us to view the amorous idyll of the Trojan pair with the eyes of Pandarus, and the Grecian heroes with the eyes of



Copy from Original Portrait of Shakespeare in Oils, 1609.

ACCEPTED AS THE PORTRAIT ENGRAVED BY DROESHOUT FOR THE 1623 FOLIO.

Thersites. Cressida, of whom he could have made so much in happier mood, is simply a light woman, inconstant, sensual, frivolous. Taken in connection with the generally melancholy character of his poetical work at this time of his life, this may well be deemed the expression of a sick and sore heart, scornful of some English Cressida unknown to us, more scornful still of himself as a dupe,

> Shamed through all his nature to have loved so slight a thing,

and summing up his view of the sex in general in Diomedes's withering denunciation of Helen :

> *Paris.* Who, in your thoughts, merits fair Helen best,
> Myself or Menelaus ?
> *Diomedes.* Both alike :
> He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,
> Not making any scruple of her soilure,
> With such a hell of pain and world of charge ;
> And you as well to keep her, that defend her,
> Not palating the taste of her dishonour.

Having thus delivered himself, Diomedes goes away, and

> Neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,
> But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view
> On the fair Cressid.

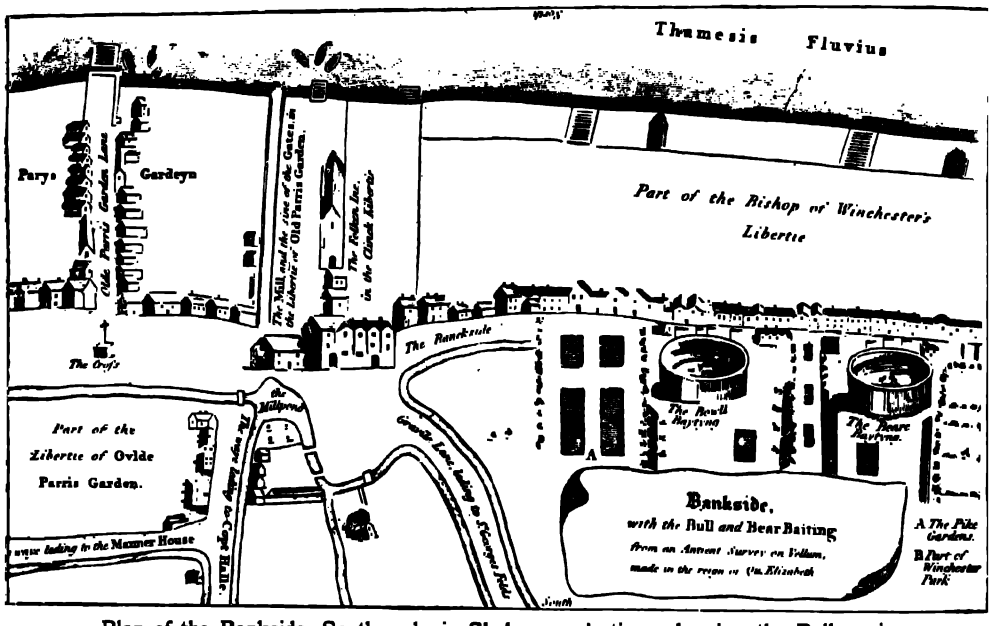
A supreme piece of dramatic irony. Viewed as a satire, *Troilus and Cressida* is one of the most interesting of Shakespeare's works; as a play it is straggling and ineffective. Its beauties are for the closet, not for the stage. It is full of insight into human nature and civil and political wisdom, especially in the marvellous speeches of Ulysses. That beginning "Troy, yet upon her basis, had been own" bears a striking resemblance to the sublime passage on Natural Law quoted in our account of Hooker. Yet the general impression is confused and enigmatical. Shakespeare might have applied to himself the lines which he puts into the mouth of Achilles :

> My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirred ;
> And I myself see not the bottom of it.

There is no reason to connect *Troilus and Cressida* with any literary feud, or with any intention of parodying the *Iliad*. Shakespeare ignores Homer, and follows the mediæval romances. Rossetti's magnificent picture of Cassandra is taken from Act V. Scene 3, and he has even improved upon the original by introducing Paris and Helen. The Prologue, Epilogue, and last speech of Pandarus are probably spurious.

If Shakespeare's mind was at this time shrouded in gloom, his external fortunes went on brightening. The accession of James in March 1603 gave him a more munificent patron than Elizabeth, and restored his disgraced friends to liberty and honour. Southampton was released, Pembroke welcomed back to Court; both were gratified with distinctions and employments. The absence of any funeral tribute to Elizabeth from Shakespeare's pen is thus susceptible of easy explanation. Elizabeth had not been an

unkind mistress to him; Ben Jonson tells us that she admired his works, and the tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written at her command, true or false, implies as much. But there is no trace of any confidential relation between them, or of his pen having been ever employed by her for any political purpose. It was otherwise with the new sovereign. We shall find evidence of Shakespeare's pen being exerted four times in James's interest. There is some slight reason for thinking that his company may have visited Scotland before James's accession, when he could not have failed to gain the King's acquaintance and favour. However this may be, Shakespeare's especial connection with Southampton must have made him an adherent of Essex, whom James regarded as the steadiest advocate of his accession to

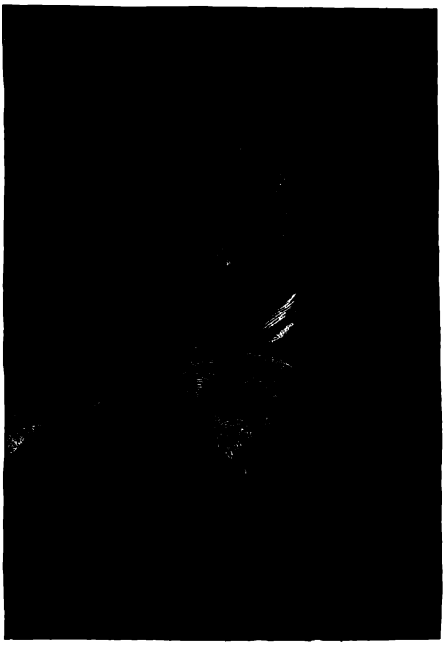


Plan of the Bankside, Southwark, in Shakespeare's time, showing the Bull- and Bear-baiting Gardens, the Falcon Inn, &c.

From an old plan in the British Museum

the English throne. Honours fell thick and fast on the Essex party, and the players were not forgotten. On May 19, 1603, Shakespeare's company, heretofore described as "the Lord Chamberlain's men," received full recognition and valuable privileges. They henceforth became known as "the King's Servants," and ranked officially with the Grooms of the Chamber. Shakespeare's plays were henceforth frequently acted at Court; between November 1604 and February 1605 his company performed before the King no less than eleven times. Upon James's solemn entry into London in March 1604, the players formed a part of the procession, vested in scarlet cloth bestowed on them for the occasion. These circumstances seem irreconcilable with the theory that Shakespeare's depression at this period of his life was due to mortification at a decline in public favour.

Shakespeare's public connection with the drama was nevertheless interrupted in 1603 by an outbreak of the plague, which put a stop to dramatic performances in London. Having now a country residence, he would, no doubt, retire to it, and would be able to spend a considerably longer time there than the pressure of the theatrical profession could previously have allowed. These circumstances may probably be connected with the production of one of his plays, *The Taming of the Shrew*. This piece, like the old play (1594) from which it is adapted, is preceded by an Induction, setting forth the merry gest of the tinker, Christopher Sly. Shakespeare's version contains local allusions to the neighbourhood of Stratford which, as Halliwell-Phillipps suggests, seem out of place if the play were not intended for representation there. The piece cannot be placed earlier than 1599, not being in Meres's list, nor could it have existed in its present form until Shakespeare had obtained a residence at Stratford. Not more than half of it is from his pen, and it seems tolerably certain that it was hastily put together for performance on some especial occasion, which Fleay reasonably supposes to have occurred in 1603, when he would have most time at his command, and when his company, banished from London by the plague, might probably be touring in the neighbourhood. The old play was entitled "The Taming of *a* Shrew." It bears no trace of Shakespeare's hand. The underplot of Bianca and Lucentio, probably written by some coadjutor, is borrowed from Ariosto's comedy of *I Suppositi*, which Gascoigne had translated. "To Shakespeare," says Mr. Grant White, "belong the re-cast Induction and all the scenes in which Katharine and Petruchio and Grumio are the prominent figures, together with the general effect produced by scattering lines and words and phrases."



Edmund Malone
A celebrated editor and commentator of Shakespeare
After the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

If this merry little comedy, thus improvised for the amusement of Shakespeare's neighbours, was produced at the period to which we have ascribed it, it was but a gleam irradiating the general sombreness of his dramatic production at the time. It was probably about this period that "the solemn comedy," as Mr. Lee appropriately terms it, *All's Well that Ends Well*, assumed definite shape. This play is generally identified with that mentioned by Meres under the title of *Love's Labour's Won*, which corresponds excellently to the nature of the action. It would be naturally supposed that

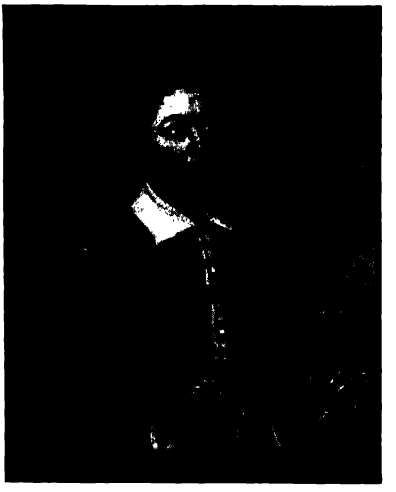
a play with this title would be produced soon after the appearance of *Love's Labour's Lost;* but, although there are some traces of archaism, the general style seems incompatible with so early a date; there also seems to be an allusion to *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, a play probably produced in 1600; and Brandes ably shows the affinity of many passages to passages in *Hamlet.*



The stage of the Red Bull Playhouse, Clerkenwell
From Kirkman's "The Wits; or, Sport upon Sport," 1673

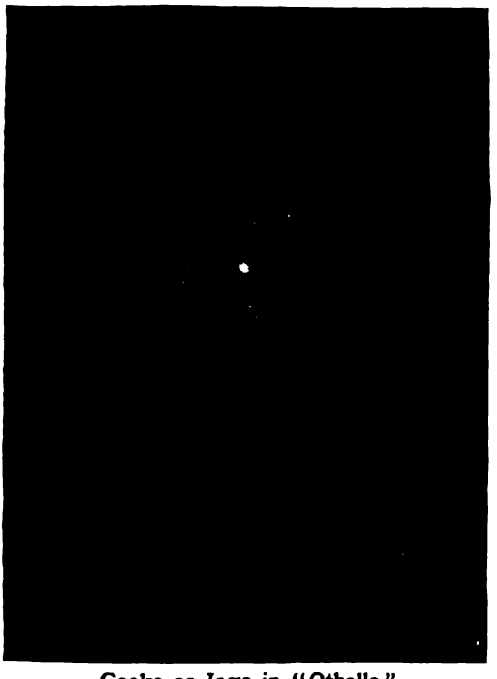
The most probable conclusion would seem to be that Shakespeare thoroughly rewrote his early work; and in our opinion this was done at some period not very remote from the composition of *Measure for Measure*, which was certainly in 1603 or 1604. The pieces resemble each other in a want of geniality, strongly contrasting with Shakespeare's earlier productions; and their chief female characters, upon whom everything depends, belong to a type rare among his women, the heroine rather made to be admired than to be loved. Helena and Isabella command our sympathies to the full; the devotion of Helena to the unworthy object of her affections is womanly as well as fine, but we hardly feel at ease with them. The other personages are for the most part either contemptible or uninteresting. The love of the noble Helena for Bertram would be hard to understand if reason could be supposed to have anything to do with the matter; and Shakespeare's geniality has deserted him in dealing with Parolles, though the comedy lacking to the character is abundantly extracted from the situation. Of the genuine Shakespearean comedy, except for the ludicrous situation of the luckless Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, there is little trace in either; and neither has ever been a favourite, though *Measure for Measure*, notwithstanding the needless offensiveness of the low-comedy scenes, takes a high place among Shakespeare's works by the veneration

claimed by the character of Isabella and the depth and pregnancy of the moral lesson taught by the fall of Angelo. The character of the Duke has much affinity to that of James I., and it cannot be doubted that the object of the piece was partly political. James had been kept out of his capital for ten months by the plague, was unknown to most of the citizens, and had been censured for want of accessibility. The Duke in *Measure for Measure* exhibits the wise sovereign temporarily withdrawn from the observation of his subjects, but acquainted in his retirement with all that passes, and reappearing at the proper moment to terminate a business whose intricacy has misled even an Escalus, but the clue to which has always been in his own hands.



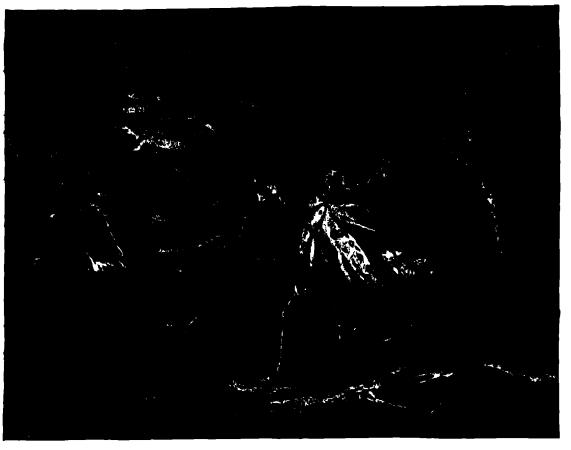
Liston as Pompey in "Measure for Measure"

In the usual chronology of Shakespeare's plays, *Othello* would appear under 1604. There is a reason, as will appear farther on, for placing this drama after Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford; and this, be it worth much or little, is confirmed by one of the most important of the metrical tests. Though not prolific of light and weak endings, *Othello* has nearly the same proportion of double-endings as those undoubted productions of his later period, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline*. If 1604 be really the correct date, it is remarkable that there should be no trace of the existence of so powerful and popular a tragedy until 1609, when a child is christened Desdemona. The alleged record of a Court performance in 1605 is a forgery; on the other hand, the assertion of Malone that he had seen evidence for the date of 1604 which satisfied him is entitled to great weight. If, notwithstanding, we are disposed to bring the accepted date a few years later down, this is mainly from the feeling that, notwithstanding the intensity of the tragedy, we have emerged into a more wholesome atmosphere than



Cooke as Iago in "Othello"

that of *Measure for Measure*, of which this date would make *Othello* a near neighbour. It would seem as though, in writing *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare had purified his own mind by pity and terror. In these dramas the two chief instruments of the tragic poet, according to Aristotle, are wielded by Shakespeare with a grandeur surpassing that which he has displayed anywhere else; and the years 1605 and 1606, to which they respectively belong, may be marked as the culminating period of his power, though not of his art. He is, indeed, favoured by his subjects. The tragedy of *Lear* is not more intense than the tragedy of *Othello*, but it is more exceptional. Groundless jealousy is not an uncommon incident in life, but the ingratitude of Lear's daughters is something absolutely preternatural, and properly accompanied by the portents of storm and tempest which the poet's imagination has conjured up. "The heavens themselves show forth the deaths of princes." Such material sublimity would have been out of place in the domestic tragedy of *Othello*. "The sensation experienced by the reader of *King Lear*," Professor Dowden justly says, "resembles that produced by some grand natural phenomenon." Next to the impression of sublimity comes that of intense compassion. Lear is the tragedy of helpless old age. From the moment when, yielding to the testiness and waywardness so ordinary with old men, he commits the irretrievable error of his life, to that when he says, "Pray you, undo this button," his thoughts and deeds are those common to humanity in its decline, but represented amid awful environments on a colossal scale. Of the place of Cordelia among Shakespeare's heroines it is needless to speak.



David Garrick as King Lear

If Lear stands on the pinnacle of pity, Macbeth occupies the pinnacle of terror. No one, the boyish Keats thought, could venture to read it alone at two o'clock in the morning. Yet the pathos is hardly inferior to the terror. It does not consist in the murder of Duncan, piteous as this is; "the ordinance of death is blown in every wind," but

> It is not a common chance
> That takes away a noble mind.

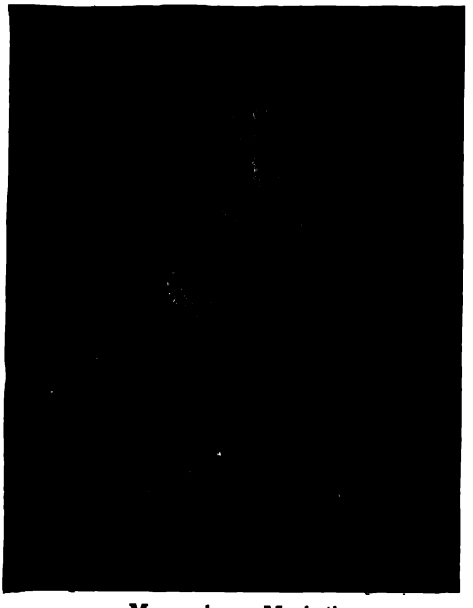
The true tragedy is the depravation of such a mind in Macbeth, a man by nature most amiable, a poet in the charm of his language and the delicacy of his sensations, but yielding beneath the influence of a stronger nature,

and unsupported by steadiness of principle. When he has once given admission to the suggestion that it is possible "to win wrongly" without "playing false," his doom is sealed, and the temptings of the weird sisters merely accelerate it. Lady Macbeth is the true evil genius of her husband, and the peculiar pathos of her situation is that for so long she has no suspicion of it. She loves him so well that her love even survives what to her coarser apprehension seems his childish and cowardly scruple. When she perceives the abyss into which she has led him she breaks down, as revealed in the sleep-walking scene, perhaps the highest achievement in all dramatic poetry for the union of pity and terror. The Witches exalt the piece by providing a supernatural background, precipitate a tragedy which would have taken place without them, and incite to the further crime of the murder of Banquo. The ease with which the naturally virtuous Macbeth, having once imbrued his hands in blood, is wrought up to this foul deed, is one of the most striking moral lessons in Shakespeare. The speech of Hecate is probably an interpolation. Other passages, such as the second scene of the first act, can hardly have come from Shakespeare's pen, and the comparative brevity of the piece, with some apparent disproportion in the length of the scenes, has led to the suspicion that it has been systematically reduced to acting proportions by some meddling playwright. There are, indeed, a few indications of retrenchment, but in our opinion this curtness is sufficiently accounted for by the obvious fact that Shakespeare must have had a Court representation of his piece in his mind from the moment that he began to plan it. He was manifestly guided to his subject by the desire to celebrate the accession of James and the consequent union of the English and Scottish crowns, the most important political event of his time. It would have been idle for him to have so laboured if the play had never been seen by him whom it was designed to honour. He must therefore have contemplated a Court representation from the first, and it had doubtless been impressed upon his mind by much mortifying experience, that a Court play must not be too long. The like cause produced the like effect when he wrote *The Tempest*, the only other play, unless the tradition respecting *The Merry Wives of Windsor* can be credited, which he composed with



Mrs. Cibber as Cordelia in "King Lear"

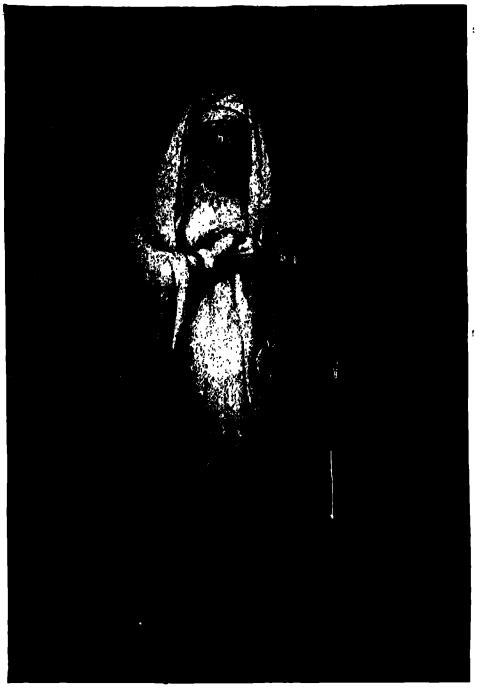
the Court mainly in his eye. The result was not unfortunate. "Shakespeare has employed in the treatment of this subject," says Brandes, "a style that suits it, vehement to violence, compressed to congestion, eminently fitted to express and to show terror." The question whether *Macbeth* was not withheld from the public stage for some time after its Court representation will be considered in another place.



Macready as Macbeth

We are now approaching an important era in Shakespeare's life, his re-establishment in his native town. He had ever since 1597 been in possession of the best house in Stratford, and his wife and daughters no doubt habitually dwelt in it, but, so long as he continued to be an actor, his own residences must have been occasional. He had clearly purchased it with the view of making it his home when circumstances should allow, and he must have been eager to carry this purpose into effect, especially as he appears to have had no great vocation for the stage. How well he understood the performer's art theoretically the directions to the players in *Hamlet* evince, and his dramas in general display a consummate knowledge of dramatic effect. But sound theory does not necessarily imply successful practice, and the minor part of the Ghost is the only one which tradition has identified with his name. Apart from this, he has recorded his distaste for the theatrical calling in lines of tragic earnestness, which alone refute the Baconian theory of the authorship of the *Sonnets*:

O for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,



Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth

That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
Pity me then, and wish I were renewed.

Shakespeare's annual emolument as an actor has been computed at £180, or about a third of his probable total income from the Globe Theatre. He had two residences to keep up, and his father having died in September 1601, leaving little if any property beside two houses in Henley Street, he was probably now the sole support of his mother. He would therefore be cautious



The Swan Theatre on the Bankside
From a drawing in the British Museum

about quitting the actor's profession, little as he loved it. The precise time of his emancipation cannot be determined, but may well have been not very remote from his contemptuous mention of the poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.

A very likely date would be the spring or summer of 1607, in the June of which year his eldest daughter Susanna married Dr. John Hall, a physician of Stratford, and quitted New Place for her husband's house. This would leave Mrs. Shakespeare alone in the house with her second daughter. It may have become necessary that Shakespeare should live more at Stratford; the marriage of his daughter would certainly bring him there, and the conjecture that his residence then became permanent is at all events very plausible. Another motive might be the probably declining health of his aged mother,

who died in the following year. So long as he continued to write plays he would, no doubt, be obliged to reside much in London. We may feel confident, however, that the more he accustomed himself to a country life the more he would be captivated by it, and the brighter and more cheerful character of his dramatic productions after the probable date of his settlement at Stratford may be traced in large measure to its wholesome influences. This settlement will be found to be connected with a peculiarity indisputably apparent in his later work, which will be best explained if considered along with one of the best authenticated of the Stratford traditions respecting him.



Quick as Launce in "Two Gentlemen of Verona"

From a drawing by Ramberg

Between 1661 and 1663 the Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford, recorded in a memorandum-book that Shakespeare, after he had taken up his residence there, regularly supplied the London theatre with two plays a year. He must have heard the story in his parish less than fifty years after the death of Shakespeare, and nothing can be more intrinsically probable than the existence of some such contract between Shakespeare and his partners in the Globe. If, nevertheless, the tradition proves at variance with any known facts, it ought to be rejected, but it is, on the contrary, entirely in harmony with a remarkable phenomenon attending Shakespeare's later dramatic work. This is his constant endeavour to diminish the labour of composition. In every play known with certainty to have belonged to his later period, *A Winter's Tale* alone excepted, recourse is had to some device tending to save trouble to the author. In *Troilus and Cressida* he revives a former play. *The Tempest* is the shortest of his dramas. In *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* he leans upon Plutarch. *Pericles* and *Timon* are largely, *Cymbeline* perhaps to some extent, by other hands. In *Henry VIII.* he collaborates with Fletcher. While this slackness is fully in harmony with the circumstances of his residence at Stratford, the alleged contract would explain why his productiveness should still be so considerable. The obligation would pull both ways. Its fulfilment would sometimes be irksome, but would always be necessary. The natural resource would be the employment of any device by which the dramatist's labour might be diminished without lowering the standard of his art. The labour-saving tendency, at all events, is undeniable, and the obligation to produce two plays a year with or without the goodwill of Minerva affords as plausible a way of accounting for it as can be conceived.

It must be inquired, however, whether it is possible so to allot Shakespeare's

work during the last years of his dramatic activity as to justify the assertion of his having for several years regularly provided the theatre with two plays annually? This cannot be said unless the composition or, which would serve equally well, the first public representation of two plays can be brought lower than the generally accepted date. There are only two possible instances, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Of *Othello* we have spoken. The versification of this play indicates a later period than that of *Lear* or *Macbeth*, and nearly that of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The absence of any trace of it until 1609—perhaps even 1610, when a performance was witnessed by a German prince on his travels in England—is remarkable in the case of a drama not only of transcendent merit, but admirably qualified for popularity. On the other side are two doubtful pieces of external evidence: Malone's statement that he knew it to have been performed in 1604, and the forged entry of its performance at Court in 1605, which *may* have been transcribed from a genuine entry. Decision is difficult.



The Falcon Tavern

Believed to have been frequented by Shakespeare and his companions

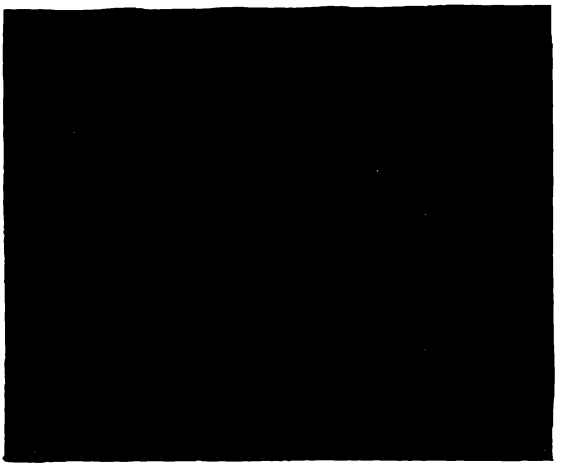
From Wilkinson's "Londinia Illustrata," 1819

The question relating to *Macbeth* is curious. The evidence for the date of 1605 or 1606 seems satisfactory, but was there a public representation at that time? The brevity of the play, and the pointed compliments to James I., show that it was intended for performance at Court. This by no means excludes public representation, but would public representation be then permitted? The Gunpowder Plot had just exploded, and the air was full of treasons and conspiracies. Might not the representation of the murder of a King of Scotland have been thought unseemly and dangerous? The question would hardly have suggested itself but for the fact that in April 1610 the play is a new one to Dr. Simon Forman, a regular playgoer, who describes a performance of it in his diary with a minuteness proving that he had never seen it before, and suggesting that he had never heard of it. None of Shakespeare's dramas is more likely to have been frequently acted; if it had really been a stock-play for four years unknown to Forman, his nescience is extraordinary. On the other hand, there is an apparent allusion to Banquo's ghost in *The Puritan*, a play printed in 1607: "the ghost in white at the head of the table." This seems strong evidence, but would Banquo have been exhibited in a white sheet? This would be contrary to the precedent of Hamlet's father, "in his habit as he lived," and would

interfere with the recognition of Banquo by the spectators. He ought not, in fact, to be visible to them any more than to the guests; but, if visible, he should appear as they have known him, only bearing the tokens of violent death, "blood-boltered," in Macbeth's parlance.

If the admitted difficulties do not prevent the acceptance of the Vicar's intrinsically most probable statement, the chronology of Shakespeare's plays after his settlement at Stratford might be as follows:

1607. *Timon of Athens; Antony and Cleopatra.*
1608. *Pericles; Othello.*
1609. *Troilus and Cressida* (revival); *Cymbeline.*
1610. *Macbeth* (first public representation); *Coriolanus.*
1611. *Winter's Tale; Two Noble Kinsmen* (?)



Miss Yonge and Messrs. Dodd, Waldron, and Love in "Twelfth Night"
Engraved by J. R. Smith after a picture by Wheatley

It will be observed that the arrangement is in pairs, each year producing one complete work of Shakespeare's and one either revived or composed in collaboration with another writer. This is exactly the method likely to be adopted by one anxious to fulfil a burdensome obligation in the easiest way possible without prejudice to his genius and character. After 1611 Shakespeare ceases to write regularly for the stage, and probably disposes of his share in the Globe, which he did not hold at his death. *The Tempest* and *Henry VIII.* were, as will be shown, produced on special occasions, and belong to 1613.

The evidence of style and versification, and the still stronger testimony of a moody and embittered spirit, constrain us to place *Timon of Athens* chronologically at the head of Shakespeare's later writings. It is, indeed, possible that it may be earlier in composition than 1607. *Timon's* affinity to *Lear* has been frequently remarked, and it may be that Shakespeare began to write it soon after the completion of that drama, and after making some progress with it, laid it aside until its production was required by theatrical exigencies. If he had by that time escaped from his period of gloom, he could not but disrelish his own work, and would be likely to commit to another the shaping of what he had rough-hewn. This is a more probable supposition than that he himself completed the work of an inferior dramatist, for in that

case he must have had the last word, and there are faults which he would hardly have been able to forbear correcting. The aid of a coadjutor is manifest, a writer not devoid of talent for the comic and serio-comic, but incapable of tragic dignity. The portions most evidently non-Shakespearean are Act I. from the entry of Apemantus to the end of the banquet; Act III., and Act V., after the last scene in which Timon appears. The genuine parts of the play are very fine, and in every way worthy of Shakespeare; the diction is frequently contorted, but so is Timon. Yet the play never could be popular, if only for want of a female character. Emile Augier has shown in his delightful comedy of *La Cigue* how a similar theme may be effectively treated, but his vein of light raillery would be impossible to Shakespeare in his actual mood. A Lucianic element which may be detected is probably due to Shakespeare's acquaintance with Boiardo's comedy, *Timone*, which is mainly translated from Lucian. Shakespeare was beyond doubt fairly well versed in Italian.



Dunstall as Dromio in "The Comedy of Errors"

The close relationship between *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, is shown by the circumstance that, though only *Pericles* was printed, both were entered for publication on the same day, May 20, 1608. Which was first written cannot be known; the probability is that some play entirely from Shakespeare's hand would intervene between two, like *Timon* and *Pericles*, produced with the help of collaborators. The question, however, is not material, for both show Shakespeare's restoration to a sane and cheerful view of life. *Antony and Cleopatra* is pre-eminently the work of one interested in "the world's great business." Hardly anywhere else is there such bustle, such variety, such zest for political and military affairs. Shakespeare is thoroughly in charity with his principal characters. His treatment of Cleopatra is purely objective, there is no trace of personal resentment as in his portrait of Cressida. In Antony he has marvellously depicted "the average sensual man," on a far lower plane than a noble idealist like Brutus, but still capable of deep human feeling. This was shown in *Julius Cæsar*, by the great speeches beginning "O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth," and "This was the noblest Roman of them all." In *Antony and Cleopatra* this depth of feeling is entirely devoted to a woman; and so intense, especially under the influence of jealousy, so sincere, so single-minded, save for one vacillation under stress of politics, is it that we overlook the fact that we have before us an Antony in decay, no longer able to sway the Roman multitude or school Octavius. Wisdom and policy are gone for ever, even martial honour is dimmed,

but love makes amends for all. Such a picture necessarily implies a corresponding brilliancy in the portrait of Cleopatra, and it is needless to remark that she is perhaps the most wonderful of all Shakespeare's studies of female character. He follows Plutarch's delineation closely, but performs the same miracle upon it as Venus wrought upon the effigy of Galatea: a beautiful image becomes a living being. Perhaps the keynote of the personality is what Shakespeare terms "her infinite variety"; there is room in her for every phase of female character. The same amplitude characterises the play itself, with its great sweep in time and place, its continual changes of scene, its crowd of personages, its multitude of speeches and profusion of poetical imagery. The contrast with *Julius Cæsar* is instructive. There the interest is more concentrated, the characterisation more minute, and the execution more laborious. The ease with which Shakespeare handles his theme in the later play, and the plasticity of the entire subject in his hands, manifest the perfection of his art by dint of practice, but impair the effectiveness of his piece on the stage. The actor has fewer grand opportunities than of yore, and although the drama is resplendent with poetical phrases, there are few sustained outbursts of passion or eloquence. The impersonation of Cleopatra, moreover, demands an actress of mature years. In Shakespeare's time there was no difficulty, for there were no actresses. The representation of his Cleopatra by a *boy* strikes us now as indescribably farcical.



Mrs. Wells as Lavinia in "Titus Andronicus"
From a drawing by Ramberg

What once seemed the knotty problem of *Pericles* has been satisfactorily resolved by modern criticism. The first two acts contain little or nothing of Shakespeare, but the last three, except for Gower's verses, are entirely his, even the brothel scenes, as we agree with Brandes in considering. Saving for these scenes, which are essential to the story, these acts make a charming little drama, a pleasing forerunner of the later style of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. He probably took the subject out of incompetent hands, but it must remain a question whether he merely continued their work or replaced what they had written by new work of his own. The description of the storm at the beginning of the third act is finer than anything similar in *The Tempest*, and a proof that Shakespeare had "gone down to the sea in ships, and occupied his business in great waters." The character of the good physician Cerimon may adumbrate Dr. John Hall, just become a member of his family.

The end of the year 1608 seems to us, on the whole, the most probable date for *Othello*, though it is always dangerous to prefer an opinion based mainly upon internal evidence, in opposition to the weakest external testimony. The painfulness of the subject has led the play to be classed among the productions of Shakespeare's pessimistic period; but he might have taken up such a theme at any time, and it is difficult to see how his treatment could have been fundamentally different. It is true that in Iago he has drawn what he has drawn nowhere else, except in *Much Ado about Nothing*, an utterly irredeemable and inexcusable villain; but nothing short of such diabolical malice and craft could extenuate the fault of Othello, who must retain our sympathy at any cost. Perhaps, if any one play could be singled out as Shakespeare's masterpiece, it would be this. As a domestic tragedy, it cannot possess the sublimity of *Lear* or the charm of *As You Like It*, nor can it "call up spirits from the vasty deep" like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. But it is perhaps, the most perfect specimen of art, every line adapted with infallible judgment to produce the total impression desired, that Shakespeare has given us.



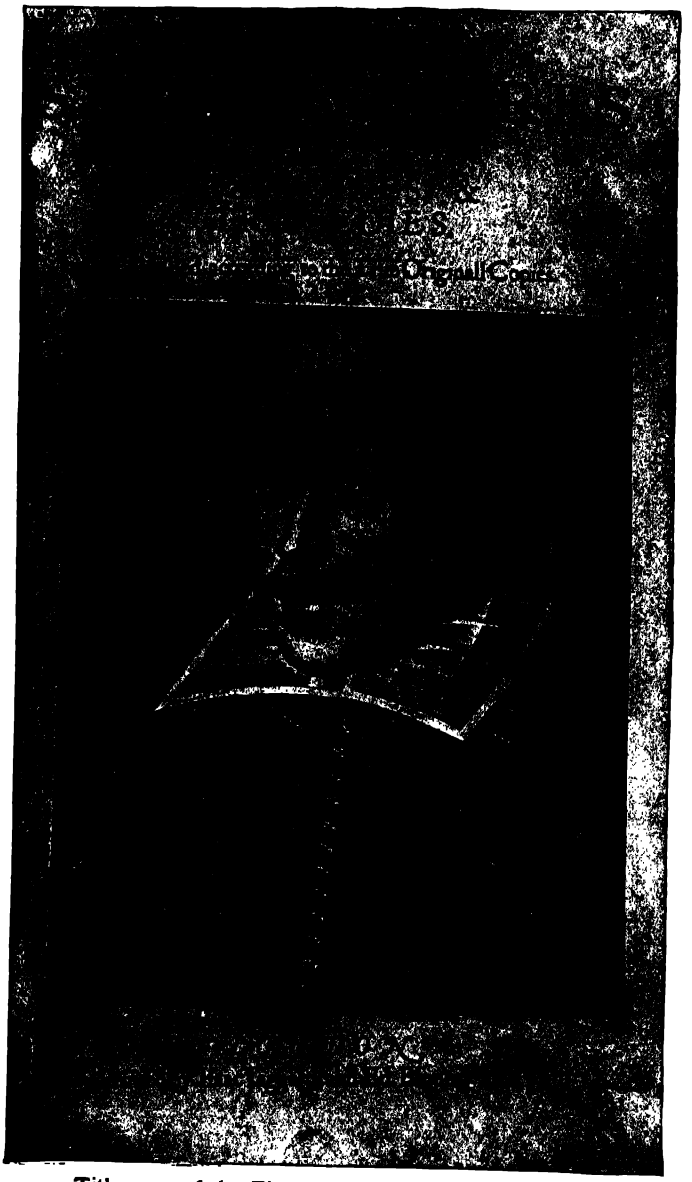
Miss Horton as Ariel in "The Tempest"

Troilus and Cressida was unquestionably produced at the beginning of 1609, but, as has been stated, was probably written some years earlier. If, however, the preface to an unauthorised reprint can be trusted, it had never been acted, and would therefore be available to help Shakespeare to keep his contract with the theatre. The anonymous prefacer deserves some credit, for he approves himself at least as good a judge of Shakespeare's merits as Ben Jonson was, and even speaks by the spirit of prophecy: "This author's comedies are so framed to the life that they serve for the most common commentaries of all the actions of our lives. . . . And believe this, that when he is gone, and his comedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English inquisition."

The spring of 1609 was signalised by another unauthorised publication, that of the *Sonnets*. The well-digested arrangement shows that the text was derived from some accurate copy. The publication may be supposed to have given Shakespeare much annoyance, but no expression of his feelings is extant. There is but one record of his having protested against the liberties so frequently taken with his works and his name.

Cymbeline may be most safely placed in the latter part of 1609. The following year would suit equally well, but that Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, in which traces of *Cymbeline* are to be found, had apparently been acted before

October 1610. *Cymbeline*, moreover, seems to follow *Othello* as its complement and corrective. If earlier than *Coriolanus*, this drama marks decisively the transition to the poet's last manner, already apparent in *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a style of growing obscurity as regards diction, but as regards versification of growing freedom, evinced in the constantly increasing tendency to unstopped lines, light and weak endings, and redundant syllables at the verse's end. Judged by the metrical tests alone, *Coriolanus* would appear to be earlier than *Cymbeline*, but, though these tests are not to be neglected, they are not absolutely conclusive. The most important, the proportion of double endings, is partly governed by the character of the play. The double-ending, imparting elasticity to the verse in virtue of the catalectic syllable, is more appropriate to buoyant spirits and enthusiastic romance; while the close-ending rather befits tragic passion and solemn pathos. It is, therefore, quite intelligible that *Cymbeline* should have more double-endings than *Coriolanus*. Brandes confidently places the latter drama in 1608. To us it seems that the comparatively



Title-page of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare

From the copy in the British Museum

laboured and involved diction forbids so close an approximation to the date of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It appears much nearer to the more elaborate speeches in *A Winter's Tale*, which undoubtedly appeared in 1611.

Cymbeline is the spoiled child among Shakespeare's dramas. It abounds with careless and provoking faults, but is so full of inimitable natural beauties that all is forgotten and forgiven, and "rapture" is the only word to define the total impression. Wildly improbable as the story is, it enchains the attention throughout; the incidents are so beautiful and touching that we feel they ought to have happened if they did not. Imogen is a combination of all the varied excellences of woman, devoted beyond example, trustful and confiding without weakness, patient and meek, yet with spirit for the most hazardous undertakings; a wife with all the charm of girlhood. The scenes with Belarius and his pupils in the woods reveal the same Shakespeare who drew the banished Duke and his company in the Forest of Arden. But the most remarkable feature of *Cymbeline* is its ushering in a wide and tolerant view of life, depending upon experience and knowledge; more sound and durable,



Shakespeare's Signature
From his Will at Somerset House

therefore, than the early geniality which depended upon temperament. This had not withstood the deceptions and mortifications of middle life, but here, and still more conspicuously in *A Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare is upon a rock, serene and invincible. The dominant note of all these plays is forgiveness. The quality of mercy is, indeed, somewhat strained in the two later plays, but not here, where Shakespeare has extenuated the sin of Posthumus by making him yield unwillingly to what appears irresistible evidence; and that of Iachimo by representing him as a heedless man of fashion whose code of morals allows him no proper sense of the infamy of his conduct, and who, when he does perceive it, is overwhelmed by remorse. The conclusion leaves a perfect sense of satisfaction, save for two faults which might easily have been avoided—the nonsense of the soothsayer and the posthumous condemnation of the wicked queen, not for poisoning, but for patriotism.

If, as we have suggested, *Macbeth* was first given to the public stage early in 1610, it was still substantially the same play that the Court had seen in 1606, even though resemblances to the diction of *Cymbeline* should be thought to strengthen the probability of its having been revised for the public stage about the time of the production of the latter drama, which would also

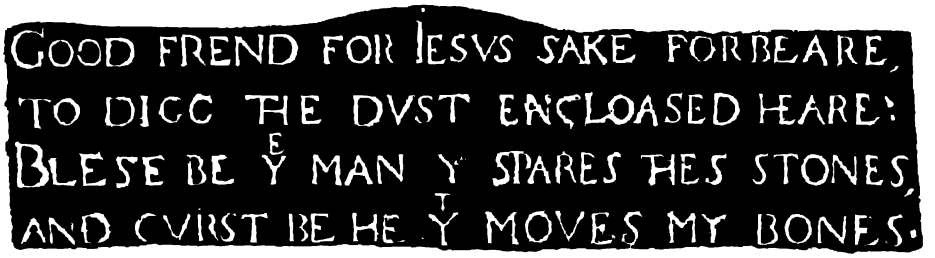
account for some metrical peculiarities. We pass, therefore, to the ripest fruit of Shakespeare's maturity, *Coriolanus*. As the poet in *Cymbeline*, so here the statesman is most prominent; and the date of 1610, defensible on other grounds, is rendered more probable by the political excitement of that year arising from the dissensions between King and Parliament. This view has been condemned as fanciful. We subscribe, nevertheless, to Sarrazin's opinion that "We are continually discovering that the great dramatist wrote more for his time and from his time than we have been accustomed to think." Nothing could move him more sensibly than this contest between Crown and Commons, King's servant as he was, under special obligation to his sovereign, and entirely conservative in his views of society and politics. He had already poured withering scorn upon the English mob in his picture of Cade and his rabble followers, and upon the Roman mob in the scenes attending Cæsar's funeral; *Coriolanus* gave him an opportunity of striking not merely at the multitude but at their leaders, for the Tribunes correspond to the refractory members of the lower House. The opportunity is used unsparingly, but at the same time the play is kept from degenerating into a party manifesto, not by extenuating the faults of the populace, but by pointing out equal faults in the aristocracy represented by Coriolanus. Shakespeare has merely to follow the narrative of Plutarch, which shows how the pride of a high-minded man, over-conscious of his real worth, begets haughtiness, and haughtiness insolence, and insolence unpopularity, and unpopularity banishment, and banishment treason, and how treason would have begotten infamy if, yielding to his better inspired mother and spouse, he had not at the last moment redeemed his honour at the sacrifice of his life. The admirable construction of the play is perhaps rather due to Plutarch than to Shakespeare; the characters, unsurpassable for force and truth, are mainly modelled after his hints; but Shakespeare, who never saw a Roman, has assimilated the Roman spirit far more perfectly than Plutarch, who lived under the sway of Rome. Menenius, Virgilia, Volumnia, are not moderns in classical masquerade, but Romans come to England. No play of Shakespeare's is more replete with pithy wisdom; but this is sometimes impaired by contorted obscurity of expression. He has in general such power of delivering himself as he wishes that he has become impatient and resentful of difficulties, and when they arise coerces language in an imperious fashion neither consistent with elegance nor with perspicuity.

A Winter's Tale had probably not been long upon the stage when Simon Forman saw it in May 1611. All the new features of style and versification conspicuous in *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus* are developed in this play to a still further extent. In borrowing his plot from Greene's *Pandosto*, Shakespeare appears to us to have for the first time built upon a sandy foundation. The interval of time in the middle, making virtually two dramas, is unfortunate; but the main defect is the utter unreasonableness of the jealousy of Leontes, which makes the foundation of the action. In such cases sympathy should be excited for the misguided offender as well as for the injured innocents.

Shakespeare has achieved this for Othello and Posthumus, but with Leontes even his art fails; the case is too flagrant. It may be granted that, psychologically, the character is a splendid study of monomania, of obsession by one fixed idea, but the exhibition of such unreason begets a feeling of angry impatience in the spectator, which cannot be allayed even by the nobility of Hermione, or the marvellous vigour and truth of the portrait of Paulina. The last two acts, on the other hand, revive the Shakespeare of *As You Like It*, who has written nothing more truly delectable than this rural idyll, the charm of which is enhanced by the consideration that he is himself a part of it, now that he is living in the country and depicting the life around him. In Perdita and her successor Miranda he displays

> An art
> Which does mend nature—change it rather, but
> The art itself is nature.

All his preceding heroines have been carefully and substantially painted,



The Inscription on Shakespeare's grave in Stratford Church

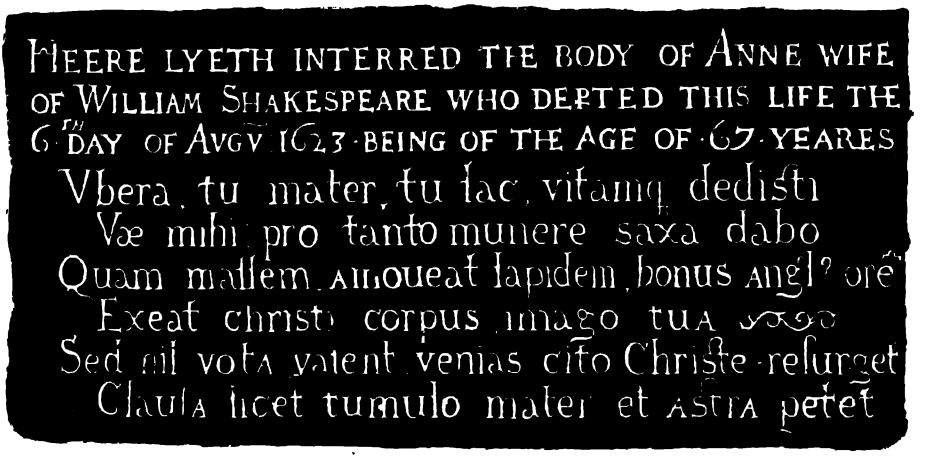
and we well know why we admire them. They "have titles manifold." Perdita and Miranda are beautiful visions, ethereal impersonations of ideal loveliness; they do nothing, for they have nothing to do; and yet we have as clear a mental picture of them as of any of their forerunners, and are as entirely in love with them as their own swains can be. This is especially the case with Miranda; something more of substantiality is communicated to Perdita by the outbreak of pride and spirit in the midst of her humiliation, so delicately introduced to indicate that, though she knows it not, her veins run with royal blood:

> I was not much afeard: for once or twice
> I was about to speak, and tell him plainly
> The self-same sun that shines upon his Court
> Hides not his visage from our cottage.

The Two Noble Kinsmen, in which Shakespeare is thought to have co-operated with Fletcher, may be probably assigned to 1611. The theory of the joint authorship has the support of the two writers' alliance in *Henry VIII.* two years later, and of the publication of the play with both their names in 1634. It further fits in well with the tradition of Shakespeare's obligation to furnish two plays annually at a time when he was becoming

more and more absorbed in the details of country life, and less and less inclined to write for the stage. His hand is most discernible in the first and fifth acts. "All the passages," says Mr. Lee, "for which he can on any showing be held responsible develop the main plot, which is drawn from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*." The omission of the play from the Folio is not a proof that Shakespeare had no share in it, for the editors left out *Pericles*, and, as Mr. Fleay makes probable, were on the point of omitting *Timon*.

After *Hamlet*, *The Tempest* has the most personal interest of any of Shakespeare's works, for as his last important production it gives his latest views on life and mankind. It follows out the same tendency as has been remarked in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, to large and liberal views of life, serene tranquillity, contented acquiescence in the lot of man, tolerance of imper-



The Inscription on the grave of Shakespeare's Wife in Stratford Church

fections and forgiveness of injuries. All these precepts are impersonated in Prospero, whose situation as a person raised above common humanity by his transcendent knowledge and his sway over the unseen world enables him to announce them with the authoritative solemnity of a messenger from heaven. That they represent Shakespeare's ultimate conclusions cannot be doubted, for the play, which bears every token of Shakespeare's latest manner, cannot have been written until after the appearance of Sylvester Jourdain's account of the tempest at the "Bermoothes," published in October 1610. There is not the least reason to suppose that Shakespeare immediately founded a drama upon this pamphlet. The improbability of his having done so is shown by the likelihood that *A Winter's Tale*, brought out in the late winter or early spring of 1611, was then in preparation. Shakespeare would not take up another theme till this was off his hands. *The Tempest*, then, can in no case be earlier than 1611, and the present writer thinks he has almost proved it to have been written in 1612–1613 for performance at Court on occasion of the nuptials of James's daughter Elizabeth with the Elector Palatine, a view

which greatly enhances the piece's beauty, ingenuity, and significance. The discussion would be too long for our space, and the reader must be referred to the author's *Essays of an Ex-Librarian*.[1]

The source of the plot of *The Tempest* has until lately been a mystery, and even the most recent writers seem unacquainted with the important discovery by Edmund Dorer of a Spanish novelette from which it is evidently derived, unless Shakespeare and the Spaniard resorted to a common source. The story, a most dull and pedantic production, occurs in a collection entitled *Noches de Invierno* (Winter Nights), by Antonio de Eslava, Madrid, 1609 (the last of the multitudinous licences is dated in September). The plot is thus summarised by Anders (*Shakespeare's Books*) :—

> Dardanus, King of Bulgaria, a virtuous magician, is dethroned by Niciphorus, Emperor of Greece, and has to flee with his only daughter, Seraphina. They go on board a little ship. In mid-ocean Dardanus, having parted the waters, rears by art of magic a beautiful submarine palace, where he resides with his daughter till she becomes marriageable. Then the father, in the disguise of a fisherman, carries off the son of Niciphorus to his palace under the sea. The youth falls in love with the maiden. The Emperor having died in the meantime, Dardanus returns with his daughter and his son-in-law to his former kingdom, which he leaves the latter to rule over, while he withdraws into solitude.

This is unquestionably the groundwork of the plot of *The Tempest*. It is some argument for Shakespeare having obtained it directly from Eslava, and not from a common source, that the title of Eslava's book, *Noches de Invierno*, may have suggested to him the title of *A Winter's Tale*, which he began to write in 1610, the year following the publication of the Spanish stories.

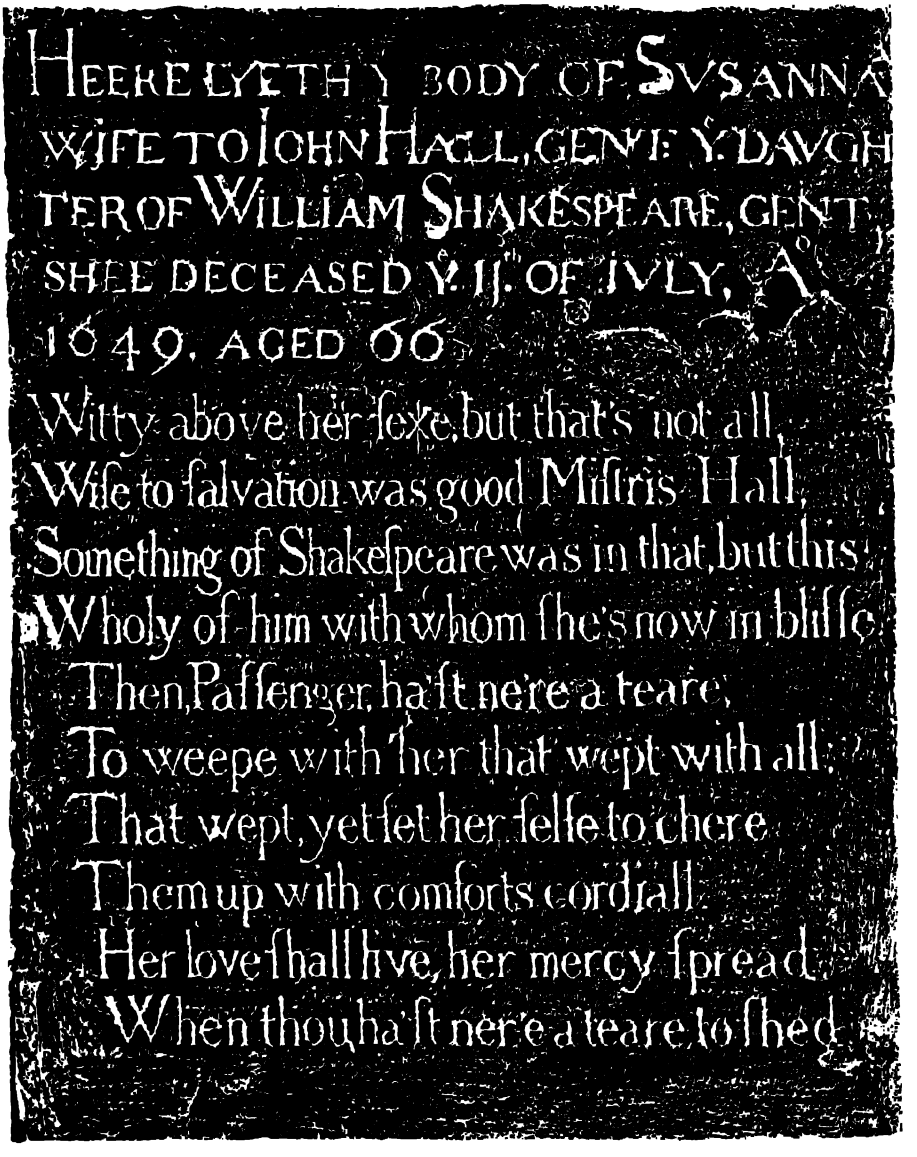
The Tempest is the most worthy conclusion imaginable of Shakespeare's dramatic career. It is a noble sunset. All is serenity, and all is splendour. The poetry is of the highest order. The action is admirably planned. The balance between the serious and the comic elements is most happily maintained. Of the imagination that could create a Caliban and an Ariel nothing need be said, and we have spoken already of its scarcely less marvellous exercise in embodying that adorable phantom, Miranda. We need not doubt that Prospero's book and staff are Shakespeare's own, and that Shakespeare partly impersonated himself in the benevolent magician. Yet not entirely.

[1] One confirmatory circumstance may be added, not observed by the author when he wrote, but pointed out by the writer of a German essay (in a *Schul-Programm*, he thinks), whose name has unfortunately passed from his remembrance. In Act I., scene 2, Prospero inquires from Ariel the time of day, and is told that it is "past the mid season." He replies:

> "At least two glasses: The time twixt six and now
> Must by us both be spent most preciously."

Why should the hour be two in the afternoon? The average day of twelve hours represents what slightly departing from the letter of Scripture to suit the duodecimal system by which diurnal time is measured, should be the normal term of human existence, seventy-two years. Allowing six years to the hour, two in the afternoon answers to forty-eight years, Shakespeare's precise age when he wrote *The Tempest*, if this was written for the Princess Elizabeth's marriage. Prospero's admonition to himself that his remaining time must be "spent most preciously" corresponds to his concluding declaration that henceforth "Every third thought shall be my grave."

Prospero betrays foibles which Shakespeare would not have put to his own account, and his confession that he lost his dukedom through seclusion from



The Inscription on the grave of Shakespeare's Daughter in Stratford Church

affairs of State, "rapt in secret studies," is manifestly intended as a warning to James, whose family concerns are the veiled subject of the piece, and whose ideal of himself is faithfully reproduced in Prospero's character. As we have written elsewhere, "A wise, humane, pacific prince, gaining his

ends not by violence but by policy; devoted to far-off purposes which none but himself can realise, much less fathom; independent of counsellors, safely contemptuous of foes, and controlling all about him by his superior wisdom; keeping in the background till the decisive hour has struck, and then interfering effectually; devoted to lawful knowledge, but the sworn enemy of black magic—such was James in James's eyes, and such is Prospero."[1]

Shakespeare's magic book, nevertheless, was not cast so deeply into the sea that it could not upon occasion, like Timon's gold in Lucian, be fished up *"Henry VIII."*



Two views of Shakespeare's Bust at Stratford-on-Avon

Specially photographed to show the curious difference between the two profiles

again. The metre of *Henry VIII.* alone would betoken a very late date, even if we did not know that it was in course of performance when, on June 29, 1613, the Globe Theatre was burned down. These metrical peculiarities are not all of one kind; some portions indicate beyond dispute the authorship of Fletcher, while the metre of other parts is fully consistent with the authorship of Shakespeare. That Shakespeare had a hand in it is certain from its appearance in the First Folio during Fletcher's lifetime. The editors must certainly have known who wrote the play that burned down their own theatre! The play is evidently a hasty piece of work, produced in response to a popular

[1] *Essays of an Ex-Librarian.*

demand, which can hardly have been unconnected with the great event of the day, the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth. It was not, like *The Tempest*, designed for representation at Court, but was meant to symbolise by the marriage of Anne Boleyn, the general relief at the Princess having made a Protestant match, and not espoused a Roman Catholic prince, which correspondence among the State Papers shows to have been much apprehended. The expedition necessary that the drama might appear while the marriage was still a topic of universal interest would involve the co-operation of two dramatists, and Shakespeare, by Ben Jonson's testimony the most facile writer of his day, and lately a proprietor of the theatre where the play was to be acted, was of all men the most likely to be invoked to help Fletcher. The portions that may be most confidently ascribed to him are Act I., scene 1; Act II., scenes 2 and 3; Act V., scene 1. All are worthy of him, if regarded as improvisations, as in fact they were. Fletcher also has written well; the fine speech of Cranmer at Elizabeth's christening brings the subject to the most satisfactory conclusion of which it admits, and would be received with enthusiasm by an audience remembering that Elizabeth was also the christian-name of the Princess whom the play was written to honour. The dramatists have shown tact in availing themselves to the utmost of Katharine's pathetic situation, without blackening King Henry, which would have ruined their design. The participation of Massinger has been suspected; but if he was, as generally believed, a Roman Catholic, he cannot well have co-operated in so Protestant a play.

If our view of the origin of *Henry VIII.* is correct, our last glimpse of Shakespeare as an author reveals him in the act of rendering a good-natured service to a fellow dramatist, an attitude entirely in keeping with his character. His remaining years were few, and the notices of him are few also. In March 1613 he bought a house in Blackfriars, which he immediately leased; in November 1614 he was in London on apparently local business; in February 1616 his daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. The serene spirit of his latest plays coincides with the date of his residence at Stratford, and could not well have been his if he had not been living in the enjoyment of domestic tranquillity. He can hardly have felt any deep affection for the wife with whose society he had dispensed for so long, but continuous dispeace would hardly have escaped the Stratford gossips. The eccentric bequest to his wife of his second-best bed must have been explicable by some circumstance unknown to us. Could it have been Mrs. Shakespeare's marriage-bed? The will which conveyed it, and at the same time gave evidence of his affection for his daughters and his remembrance of his old theatrical comrades, was executed on March 25, 1616. The testator declares himself to be then "in perfect health," but by April 23 he was no more. According to a tradition preserved by Ward, his death was occasioned by a fever contracted at a jovial meeting with Ben Jonson and Drayton. It may be doubted whether Ben was sufficiently well affected to Shake-

speare and Drayton to come down to Warwickshire to drink with either of them.[1]

On April 25 Shakespeare was interred in the parish church, and honoured with a tomb in the chancel, not as a poet, but as an impropriator of tithes. His grave was covered with a flat stone, bearing the inscription known to all, artless indeed, but adapted to the capacity of the sextons for whose admonition it was designed. But ere long, certainly by 1623, when it is mentioned by



The chancel of Stratford Church, showing Shakespeare's Bust

Leonard Digges, an elaborate monument, including the famous bust, was erected in the chancel, at the cost, tradition affirms, of his daughter Susanna Hall. The terse Latin distich inscribed upon it celebrates Shakespeare's wisdom, urbanity, and genius for epic poetry, but is silent as to his work as a dramatist :

Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus maeret, Olympus habet.

The temper of Sophocles no less than his genius resembled Shakespeare's,

[1] In the very year of Shakespeare's death Jonson ridiculed *The Tempest* and *Henry V.* in a prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, not in the first edition. His professed eulogium on Drayton appears to us a thinly disguised satire.

but, instead of the expected *Sophoclem*, we get *Socratem* at the expense of a false quantity. One is led to suspect that the writer disapproved of plays, in which case he may well have been Shakespeare's son-in-law, Dr. John Hall, a Latin scholar with Puritan leanings. If so, we have testimony to the affection with which Shakespeare was regarded in his own family; further evinced by the bestowal of his surname as a christian-name upon the eldest son of his daughter Judith, born in the November succeeding his death. The English lines upon the monument were probably composed by some friend in London.

Space forbids our attempting any survey of Shakespeare's literary or intellectual character. Inexhaustible themes for discussion are afforded by his probable views on religion and politics, his obligations to predecessors and his relations to contemporaries, his appreciation in his own day and his influence on the after-world. The comparative fulness of the treatment which, nevertheless, we have been able to accord him, will not appear disproportionate when it is considered with what remoteness from all possible competition he stands forth as Britain's national poet. To remove any other great poet from our literature would be to lop off a limb from a many-branching tree, to remove Shakespeare would be to take the sun out of heaven.

CHAPTER VII

THE JACOBEAN POETS

THE authors who will be considered in the remaining chapters of this volume were all of them liable in earlier and laxer periods of literary history to be treated as being what was vaguely called "Elizabethan." Fifty years ago it awakened no protest to see Shirley described as an Elizabethan dramatist and Hall as an Elizabethan prose-writer, although the former was only seven years old when the great Queen passed away, and although the latter survived until within four years of the Restoration. All that was seen in the general survey was the burst of production between the reign of Mary and the Commonwealth, and to this it was natural to assign the name of its most picturesque and romantic patron. But we realise now the inconvenience of treating this complex period under one heading, and we see, moreover, a subtle difference between the character of what was written in England during the reign of Elizabeth and the character of what belongs to James I. It is often objected that monarchs have nothing to do with literature, and that a division of poetry and prose effected on monarchical lines must be perfunctory and fallacious. But in times when the sovereign was the active source of public feeling, when everything that moulded national life was attached, as with strings or rays, to the steps of the Throne, a modification of the arts might be directly consequent on the death of a ruler.

In the case of Elizabeth this was more than commonly true, and we are perfectly justified in drawing an invisible line across the chronicle of our literature at the year 1603, and in calling what precedes it Elizabethan and what follows it Jacobean. The death of the Queen was a signal, for which the intellectual part of the country had, more or less consciously, been respectfully waiting. It meant very much more than a different set of costumes at Hampton Court or a new head on the coinage. It meant the introduction of a fresh era, which had long been preparing, but which reverence and awe for a venerable lady had restrained. Everybody who suffered from the severity of the old *régime* greeted the new reign with hopefulness. The new monarch, conscious of the somewhat unwelcome part he had to play, was lavish in his declarations of universal encouragement and kindliness. Elizabeth had outlived almost every one of those who had helped her to usher in her peculiar systems, political, ecclesiastical and social. Her prestige, as of a noble aged creature, majestic in her extreme fragility, preserved itself

in an artificial abstraction. She died, and as her subjects reverently bowed their heads, they might be overheard to breath a sigh of relief.

In literature the change was subtler and less direct than it was in politics. It would be an absurd mistake to seek for any sudden change. The alteration was made gradually; it is more a matter of tone or colour than an abrupt matter of form. But, looking broadly at English books from 1580 to 1625, we see towards the middle of that period a tendency to alteration which is the more palpable the further we recede from it. It is like the general aspect of a rolling range of mountain where, at a due distance, we perceive diffused light on the one side, diffused shadow on the other. This symbol may be the more readily accepted, because the general trend is unquestionably to the peak of Shakespeare and then gently down into the flat country again. The Elizabethan period is the sun-lighted ascent, the Jacobean is the more and more deeply shadowed decline. But round the central height, on what we may call the upland alps, the altitude is so great and the luminosity of the atmosphere so general that we do not inquire whether we happen to stand on the side of rise or of descent. Nevertheless, an element, very difficult to define, distinguishes Marlowe, who is entirely on the ascending plane, from Ben Jonson, who is very near the summit, and who spreads around it, and who yet is definitely and unavoidably, in the main body of his work, at that place where the general slope begins to decline.

For one thing, the death of the stubborn and dauntless Elizabeth marked the final break-up of that survival of mediæval sentiment which she had so resolutely upheld. Certain prejudices of the Queen had succeeded in preventing, or delaying, the fusion of those great elements which flowed through England during the middle of her reign. She separated them, she kept them from mingling in one great national channel, but this unification was inevitable, and it proceeded as soon as her powerful hands were relaxed. All through her reign the Renaissance, which had arrived in England so tardily, was still further delayed in its action by the surviving traditions of the Middle Ages. The new learning, the new ardour for beauty, the new habit of speculation, were all busy in Elizabeth's reign, but they were not allowed freely to communicate with one another. They were partly intermingled, but they were not blended into a consistent and progressive unity. This result of this lack of fusion was that, even in their most brilliant developments, something of an exotic character was retained. In poetry, to take an example which comes directly home to us, certain series of beautiful pieces of writing might be termed Italian, or Latin, or even French, by an observer anxious to minimise the originality of the new English literature. But with the withdrawal of the restraints of Elizabeth, our writings immediately became nationalised, and there could no longer be a question that, for good or ill, they represented direct the instincts and aspirations of the English people, and not those of a cluster of refined scholars in a college, or of the courtiers who collected round some Italianated nobleman.

If, moreover, any irresolute English author had been inclined to doubt



Title-page of the "Works of King James I." 1619

whether the practice of literature would be tolerated during the new reign, his fears might well have been founded on the apprehension that the monarch was too much rather than too little interested in the art of letters. In King JAMES VI. and I. the London poets came forward to welcome one who was so far from "hating boetry"—like one of his successors—that he had laboured with zeal to become a poet himself. Nor was verse the only medium in which James VI. of Scotland had exercised his abilities. He was no less ambitious to shine in prose, as theologian, as critic, as sociologist, as publicist. No writer in the glorious galaxy of his English subjects, not even Bacon and Raleigh, sought to excel in so many fields of literature as the King; certainly none was so confident, in his sanguine moments, that he had succeeded in all. No one, in the presence of Apollo, affected more ecstasy, or assumed a greater claim to poetic immortality.

I shall your names eternal ever sing;
I shall tread down the grass on Parnass hill;
By making with your names the world to ring,
I shall your names from all oblivion bring;
I lofty Virgil shall to life restore,—

sang King James VI. very lustily in his *Invocations to the Goddis*, and his were none of those elegant and trivial efforts at genteel penmanship which royal personages in all ages have conceived to be a graceful amateur pastime. There was nothing of the amateur about James. He aimed at no less glory than is given by "the perfection of Poesy, whereunto few or none can attain." Moreover, he was in this also, so far as he went, a genuine man of letters, that he saw, and poignantly and repeatedly deplored, his own deficiencies. Criticism, which could otherwise hardly treat the grotesque works of James I. with patience, is disarmed by his candour. "Alas!" he says, "God by nature hath refused me the like lofty and quick genius"—which he is applauding in the French poet Du Bartas—"and my dull muse, age and fortune have refused me the like skill and learning." Later on in life, when the King still hankered after literary glory, still stretched on tiptoe to pluck a leaf from the golden laurel which, after all, he found to hang too high for him, his judgment was better than his practice. He could not pretend even to his subjects that he was satisfied with his own prose or verse, and there is something really pathetic in the way in which he alternates sentences of royal truculence with apologies for imperfections due to burdens of office so great and so continual, and to a spirit that never has leave to be "free and unvexed." Evidence seems to prove that the King's modest estimate of his own genius was more than acknowledged in England, and literary aspirants had to be very poor or in great personal danger before they brought themselves down to flattering the monarch as a writer. But, in an age so abundantly autocratical, there must have been something extremely gratifying to the mind of authors in knowing that any one of them could hope to do better than the despot what the despot of all things most desired to do.

James VI. of Scotland and I. of England (1566–1625) was the son of Mary, Queen of Scotland, and Lord Darnley. His mother's abdication, the year after



James I.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY PAUL VAN SOMER.

his birth, made him King of Scotlaud, and exposed him to extraordinary dangers. Those about him, however, perceived these perils, and his education was conducted with remarkable care and good sense. He became a sound scholar, and his intellectual sympathies were widened almost to the limits of taste and knowledge as understood by the Renaissance of his time in Scotland. He early determined to be an eminent writer, and in 1584, in the midst of the intrigues of politicians contending for his person, he published *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesie*. These are sonnets, in which the King emulates the French writers of his day, a romance in *rime royal* called *Phœnix*, some short gnomic pieces, and versions of his favourite poet, Du Bartas, and of Lucan. All these, though with some Scotch peculiarities, are essentially and characteristically Elizabethan. In 1588, James began his career as a theologian by the publication of the first of his *Meditations*. In 1591 he issued fresh sets of translations from Du Bartas as *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours*, in 1597 a prose dialogue on *Demonology*, and in 1599 his political treatise called *Basilikon Doron*, dedicated to his son Henry. All these were his publications before, in 1603, he became King of England; after that event he produced *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1603), *A Counterblast to Tobacco* (1604), *Triplici Nodo Triplex Cuneus* (1607), and a number of controversial works of theology. He permitted his chaplain, Richard Montague (1577–1641), the famous author of the *Appello Cæsarem*, to collect his *Works* in 1616. This was done, with much greater completeness, by Mr. R. S. Rait in 1900–1901.

If James I., on his arrival at his Southern country, had any time to spare for an inspection of the national poetry, he might observe that the sonnet had undergone rapid and complete development since he, in 1584, and under the guidance of Du Bartas, had been one of the first to cultivate it in the North. The posthumous publication of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, of which an account has already been given, had given a violent stimulus to the fashion of writing sonnets; during the last ten years of Elizabeth this was one of the forms of literature most universally cultivated. The *Delia* of SAMUEL DANIEL, which was very widely enjoyed and imitated, inaugurated the system by which poets enshrined in cycles of sonnets, under a feigned pastoral name, their amatory passion for some cold fair lady or their enthusiastic admiration of some friend. In this, the second period of the English sonnet, close attention was paid to smoothness of versification, and in this respect the performances of the sonneteers were of great value. They made the old rough jingle of the popular poetry intolerable to the ear, by familiarising it with more luxurious and delicate artifice in prosody. Many of the sonnet-cycles, in fact, were no more than exercises in versification, and the best sonneteers, having learned to manipulate iambic verse and to arrange their rhymes, passed on to other business of a broader kind. But some of the sonnet-cycles were valuable in themselves, and free from slavish imitation of Desportes and the other fashionable French models. There is intellectual strength and a certain splendour of imagery in Barnabe Barnes (1569–1609), whose *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* belongs to 1593. Barnes, who had been a soldier in Italy and France, had a wide knowledge of the writings of the Pléiade,

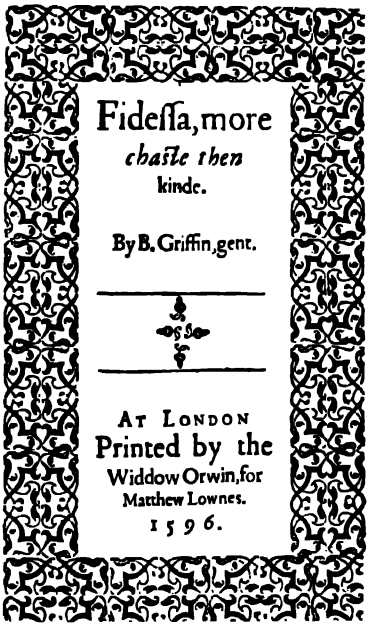
purtie according to goddis worde, & sufficient provision for thaire sustentation á cumlie ordane in thaire policie, the pryde punished, humiliate aduancid, & sa thay sa to reuerence thaire superiors & thaire estaitis thaime, as the flourishing of youre estate in peace piete, iust & learning maye be ane of the cheif poinctis of youre earthlie glorie, being euer alyke aware vaire with banish the extremities, alsweill as eye suppresse the vaine puritane sa not to suffer proude papall bischoppis, but as sum sic thaire qualities will deserue to be preferrid before o[th]ers sa thaime with siccbandis as maye preserue that estate from corruption to corruption. the more estate now that be ordoure cummis in purpose according to thaire rank is in parliament is the nobilitie alebeit secunde in rank yette ouer farre first in greatnesse & power ather to doe goode or euill as thay are inclyned, the naturall feiblenes is that I haue perceaued that estate subiect to in my tyme has bene á fetches arrogante conceat of thaire greatnes & power drinking in with thaire aer ie noorishe milke that thaire honour stoode in three cornering thrree poinctis of iniquitie, to thrall be oppression the meaner sorte that dwellis nere thame & to thaire seruice following, alebeich thay handle nathing of thaime, to maintaine thaire seruandis & dependaris in any wronge alebeich thay be not answerable to the lawe for any boddie will maintaine his man in á violent cause, & for any displeasure that thay apprehende to be done unto thaime be thaire neichboure to take up á plaine feade against him, & without respect to god, king or commounweall to lay in ouer braachie he & all his kinne against him & all his, yea thay will climbe the king seate in thaire commoune iniuice thay agree to geue vne assurance to á thrie daye for keeping of the peax, quhaire be thaire naturall deuice thay are obleist to obey the law & keipe the peace all the dayes of thaire lyfe upon the perrell of thaire

Facsimile page of the MS. of "Basilikon Doron," preserved in the British Museum

and directly imitates Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. Here is a typical sonnet by Barnes :

That golden planet, lamp of this world's light,
Whose glorious eastern insurrection shows
His ceaseless course, whose term no creature knows
That silver planet, torch of silent night,
Which, when the Sun reposeth his beams bright
In western seas, her planet-darts forth throws,
Whose influence doth strange events compose ;
That boisterous turbulence of north winds' might
Which swells and ruffles in outrageous sort ;
Those cheerful southern showers whose fruitful dew
Brings forth all sustenance for man's comfort ;
East, West, North, South, if none thy puissance knew,
Relate thy wondrous virtues, and with praise
From West to East, from North to South them raise.

Daniel was the master openly accepted in his *Fidessa* of 1596 by Bartholomew Griffin, by the unknown author of *Zepheria* in 1594, by William Percy (1575–1648) in his *Cœlia* of 1594, and by Richard Linche in his *Diella* of 1596. It is hardly necessary to point out that there were greater poets than those, independent of the influence of Daniel, who nevertheless had doubtless read the *Delia* and been stimulated by it. Among such accidental or occasional sonneteers we include not Shakespeare merely, but Spenser, in his *Amoretti* of 1595, Drayton in his *Idea's Mirror* of 1594, and Donne. The entire business of sonnet-writing, in which a considerable amount of personal emotion was unquestionably combined with vague and sinuous methods of expression, which often subtly concealed it, was of very great importance as a school of poetic style. It was by composing sonnets in the last years of Elizabeth's reign that the ordinary clever person first learned to use his own language with security and grace.


Fideſſa, more
chaſte then
kinde.
By B. Griffin, gent.
At London
Printed by the
Widdow Orwin, for
Matthew Lownes.
1596.

Title-page of Bartholomew Griffin's "Fidessa," 1596

But in the general practice of these forms the glowing spring-tide of poetry was already on the wane. The victory of imaginative speech had now become so universal that all human thought began naturally to turn to verse whether it was genuinely poetical or not. This was the moment at which men of high talent began to be poets when nature had perhaps intended them rather to excel as historians or philosophers. In the laureate, SAMUEL DANIEL, whose influence we have seen to have been paramount as a sonneteer, we meet with the first example of poetry beginning to wither on the bough. Daniel's

grace, smoothness and purity seem to belong to a much later period, and to a time when the imagination had lost its early fervour. He wrote lengthy historical poems, besides numerous sonnets, masques, and epistles. These last, which have the merit of brevity, are Daniel's most attractive contributions to English literature, and are singularly elegant in their stately, limpid flow of moral reflection. In prose, Daniel showed himself one of the most instructed of our early critics of poetry. Another philosophical writer, on whose style the turbulent passion of the age has left but little mark, is the great Irish jurist, Sir JOHN DAVYS, who, in his youth, composed several poems of the highest merit in their limited field. In his *Nosce Teipsum*, a treatise of considerable length and perspicuous dignity, dealing with the immortality of the soul, Davys was the first to employ on a long flight the solemn four-line stanza of which the type is supplied by the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. Three years earlier he had printed a most ingenious philosophical poem, *Orchestra*, in praise of dancing; and the delicacy of Davys's talent is well seen in a little work less known than either of these, the *Hymns of Astræa*. The *Hymns of Astræa* are neither better nor worse than the ordinary poetical compliments paid to Elizabeth. They certainly do not show Davys at his best. Both Daniel and Davys offer early and distinguished examples



Title-page of "The Civile Wares," 1609, with portrait of Daniel

of the employment of imagination to illuminate elaborate mental processes.

Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) was the son of a music-master at or near Taunton, where he was born towards the end of 1562. At the age of seventeen he was entered a commoner of Magdalen College, Oxford. Here he stayed three years, but, having devoted himself more to English history and poetry than to "pecking and hewing at logic," he left the University without a degree. Daniel's first publication was *A Worthy Tract of Paulus Jovius*, in prose (1585). But this was an accidental exercise, for he was really giving himself heart and soul to the study of poetry, having, he says, "adventured to bestow all my powers therein." Daniel spent some time in Italy, and appears to have been personally acquainted with the poet Guarini, whose *Pastor Fido* brought him into fame in 1590. Daniel was slow to give his writings to the public, and his earliest sonnets appeared, surreptitiously, in Nash's (1591) edition of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*. Finally, in February 1592, the first edition of Daniel's *Delia* appeared, with the romance of *The Complaint of Rosamond* appended to it. The publications of Daniel now became abundant—in 1594, the archaic tragedy of *Cleopatra*; in 1595, *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars*; in 1599, *Musophilus* and *A Letter from Octavia*. In 1601 Daniel, now one of the most popular living writers, collected his *Works*. He became tutor to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and afterwards to Anne Clifford at Appleby and at Skipton, until he resigned his charge in 1602. Daniel welcomed the King and Queen in Rutland as they were approaching London with a stately and far from obsequious *Panegyric*; the sovereigns appear to have been pleased with him, and he took his place forthwith at Court, where he acted as a species of unofficial poet-laureate, preparing masks, songs and dramatic interludes. His duties seem to have included the licensing of plays. For this he enjoyed a "fair salary," and was the Queen's "servant in ordinary." He speaks of the repose which this permanent patronage afforded him:

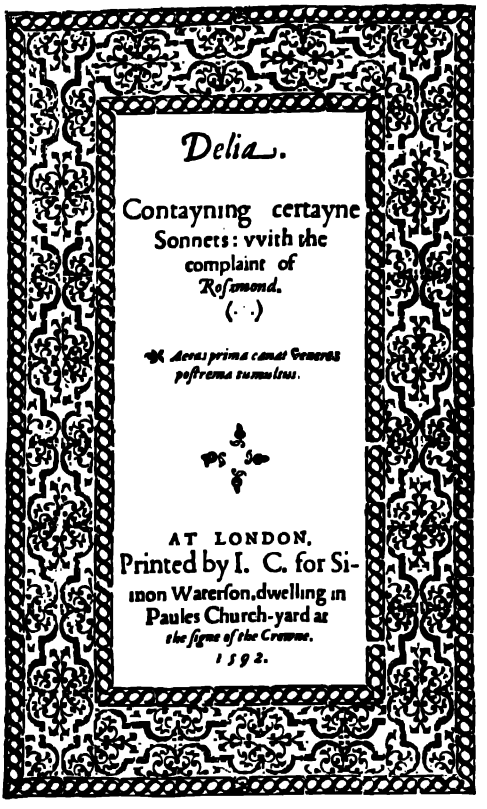


Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset
After the portrait by Mytens

> I who, by that most blessed hand sustained
> In quietness, do eat the bread of rest.

He held his theatrical censorship from 1603 until 1618. As the years progressed, a certain sluggishness of temperament, which had always, perhaps, been characteristic of him, became more marked. He "would be hid at his garden-

house in Old Street, near London, for some months together, as the tortoise busieth himself all the winter in the ground." This was with the purpose of devoting himself more completely to his work, which gradually grew to be almost wholly historical. His great *History of England* was brought to the death of Stephen in 1612 and to that of Edward III. in 1617; he then resigned it into the hands of John Trussell, of Winchester. More and more averse to society, Daniel "turned husbandman," and rented a farm at Beckington, in his native county of Somerset, where he died in October 1619; his former pupil, Anne Clifford, now Countess Dowager of Pembroke and Montgomery, raised a monument to him in the church of Beckington. The fame of Daniel, long obscured, was revived at the Romantic Revival. Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt, and Lamb competed to eulogise him, and Coleridge said: "Read Daniel—the admirable Daniel—in his *Civil Wars* and *Triumph of Hymen*. The style and language are just such as any very pure and manly writer of the present day (Wordsworth, for example) would use; it seems quite modern in comparison with the style of Shakespeare."


Delia.

Contayning certayne Sonnets: vvith the complaint of Rosamond.

(..)

Aeneas prima canat Troiæ & postrema tumultus.

AT LONDON, Printed by I. C. for Simon Waterson, dwelling in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the Crowne. 1592.

Title-page of the earliest edition of Samuel Daniel's "Delia," 1592

How simple the narrative manner of Daniel was may be exemplified by stanzas taken almost at random from the *Civil Wars*:

And, Memory, preservress of things done,
Come thou, unfold the wounds, the wrack, the waste;
Reveal to me how all the strife begun
'Twixt Lancaster and York in ages past;
How causes, counsels, and events did run
So long as these unhappy times did last;
Unintermixt with fiction's fantasies.
I versify the truth, not poetise.

And to the end we may with better ease
Discern the true discourse, vouchsafe to show
What were the times foregoing near to these,
That these we may with better profit know;
Tell how the world fell into this disease,
And how so great distemperature did grow,
So shall we see by what degrees it came,
How things, at full, do soon wax out of frame.

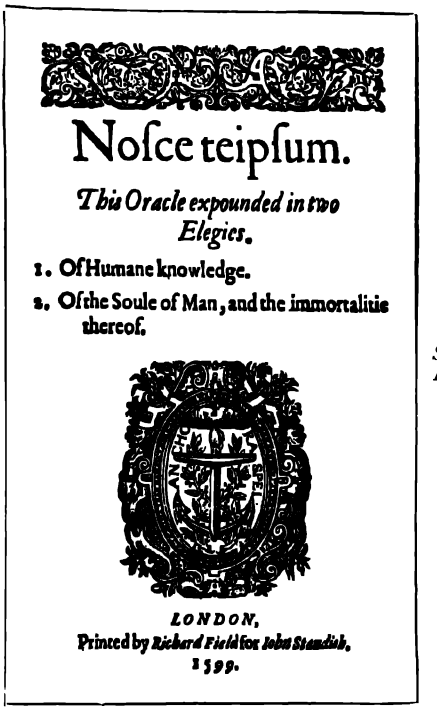
For kings had, from the Norman conqueror, reigned
With intermixt and variable fate,

When England to her greatest height attained
 Of power, dominion, glory, wealth, and state;
After it had, with much ado, sustained
 The violence of princes, with debate
For titles, and the often mutinies
Of nobles for their ancient liberties.

The tendency of Daniel was against the picturesque and romantic, and towards the civilised and modern in literary taste. In this respect he occupies a remarkable position as dimly foreshadowing the eighteenth century, and exemplifying that instinct for rigid propriety of diction of which we find scarcely a trace in English literature before him. Daniel was a philosophical realist, and he dared to gird even at Spenser for his romance, saying, in the course of his *Delia*:

Let others sing of knights and paladines,
 In aged accents and untimely words,
Paint shadows in imaginary lines
 Which well the reach of their high wits records.

Such adventures in language and in art were unwelcome to the "sober-minded Daniel."


Nosce teipsum.

This Oracle expounded in two Elegies.

1. Of Humane knowledge.
2. Of the Soule of Man, and the immortalitie thereof.

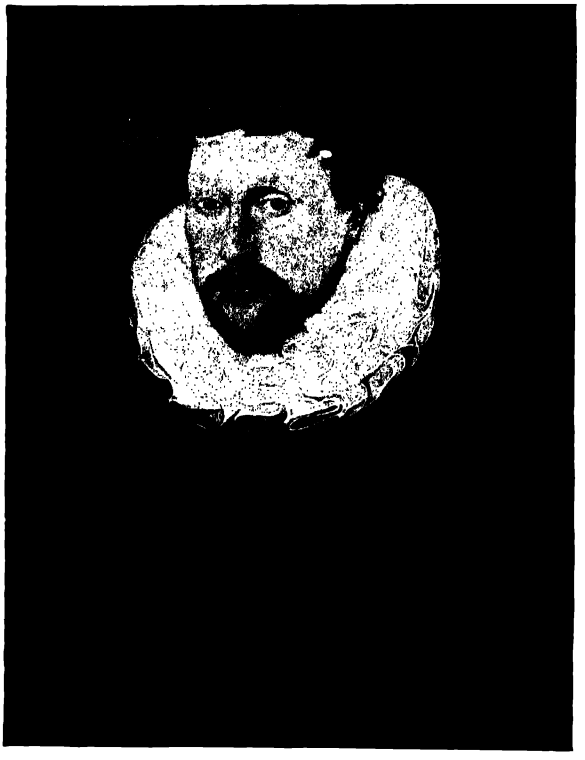
LONDON,
Printed by Richard Field for John Standish.
1599.

Title-page of Sir John Davys's "Nosce Teipsum," 1599

Sir John Davys

Whether Sir JOHN DAVYS (or DAVIS) (1569–1626) joined in the otherwise universal laudation of Daniel's early poems is uncertain. If, as is supposed, Davys satirised his contemporary under the name of Dacus, he put his finger with great emphasis on Daniel's radical fault, the prosiness of his poetry. To the witchery of the sonnet-cycles, too, Davys was recalcitrant, circulating in MS. a series of *Gulling Sonnets*, which were impertinent parodies of *Delia*. Nevertheless, the place of Davys in literary history is very close to that occupied by Daniel. He was the third son of John Davys of Tisbury, in Wilts, where he was christened on April 16, 1569. His father died when the poet was ten years of age, "and left him with his two brothers to his mother to be educated; she therefore brought them all up to learning." John was sent to Winchester, and in 1585 to Queen's College, Oxford; in 1587 he was admitted to the Middle Temple. Little is known about his early years, but in 1593 he had ready for the press his poem on dancing, called *Orchestra*, which appeared in 1596. In the preceding year Davys had become a barrister, but early in 1598 he was disbarred for cudgelling Richard Martin—afterwards Recorder of London, but then a young man of manners no less boisterous than his own—during dinner in Hall. Davys went back to Oxford in disgrace, and wrote his great philosophical poem, the *Nosce Teipsum*, which appeared in

1599. Queen Elizabeth was greatly pleased with this work, and in the same year Davys addressed to her his *Hymns to Astræa*. He was now in great favour, and in 1601 he sat for Corfe Castle in the Queen's last parliament. Davys was one of those selected to attend Lord Hunsdon in announcing to James VI. of Scotland his accession. When his name was announced in the presence, the literary King immediately asked "whether he were *Nosce Teipsum*," and on learning that he was, "embraced him and conceived a considerable liking for him." His further favour was shown by Davys's appointment in November of the same year to be Solicitor-General for Ireland, when he was knighted. His career (save that in 1622 he collected his poems) was henceforth entirely dedicated to legal and political business, in which he displayed ability of a very high order. Charles I. was prepared to continue the favour which his father had shown to Davys, who was finally nominated to the post of Lord Chief Justice, the purple and ermine robes being actually purchased, but just before the date of his promotion he was found dead in his bed, on December 8, 1626. Davys enjoyed the reputation, both in Ireland and England, of being *judex incorruptus et patronus fidus*. His daughter, having recently married Lord Hastings, became Lucy, Countess of Huntingdon. Of the poem on the *Immortality of the Soul*, which so deeply impressed Sir John Davys's generation, a fragment of quotation may suffice :



Michael Drayton
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

I know my body's of so frail a kind
As force without, fevers within can kill ;
I know the heavenly nature of my mind ;
But 'tis corrupted both in wit and will.

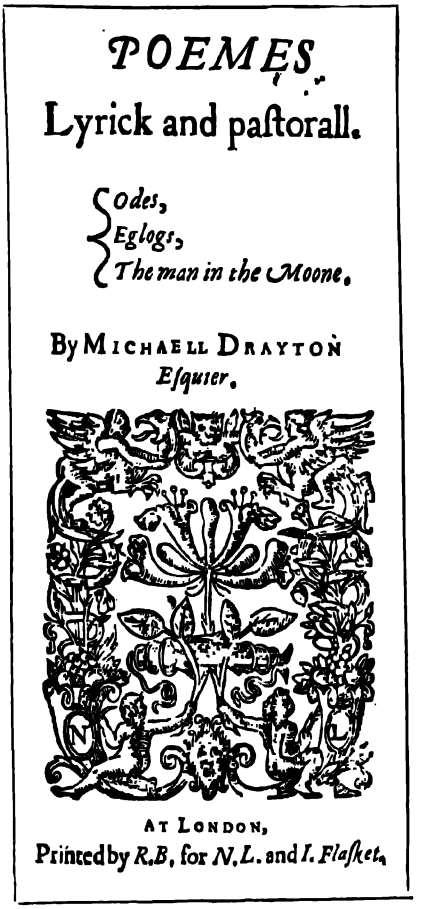
I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all ;
I know I am one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a pain and but a span,
I know my sense is mocked with everything ;

And, to conclude, I know myself a MAN—
Which is a proud, and yet a wretched thing.

Either Davys or Daniel might easily have given his talent all to prose. Their friend and companion, MICHAEL DRAYTON, was not a better poet, but he was much more persistently devoted to the cultivation of the art of verse, and regarded himself as absolutely consecrated to the Muses. During a life more prolonged than that of most of his contemporaries, he never ceased to write — feverishly, crudely, copiously, very rarely giving to his work that polish which it needed to make it durable. Of his lyrical vocation there could be no doubt; yet, if Daniel and Davys were prose-men who wrote poetry, Drayton was a prosaic poet. His masterpiece of topographical ingenuity, the *Poly-Olbion*, a huge British gazetteer in broken-backed twelve-syllable verse, is a portent of misplaced energy. In his earlier historical pieces Drayton more closely resembles Daniel, whom, however, he exceeds in his lyrics as much as he limps behind him in his attempts at gnomic verse. Drayton writes like a man, and a few of his odes are still read with fervour; but his general compositions, in spite of all their variety, abundance, and accomplishment, fail to interest us; a prosy flatness spoils his most ambitious efforts. He helps us to comprehend the change which was to come in sixty years, and through Cowley he prophesies of Dryden. In his personal character and his attitude to literature, it is impossible not to be reminded by Drayton of Southey; the Jacobean poet had the same confidence in his own powers, the same encyclopædic aims, the same fluency, hardness and manly strength, combined with a similar absence of charm. Unlike Southey, however, Drayton kept himself, through a long and busy life, almost exclusively to verse. His self-sufficiency was unshaken; his monument in Poets' Corner describes him as one who had but to "exchange his laurel for a crown of glory," and he describes himself, in *The Man in the Moon*, as a poet who had

Michael Drayton


POEMES,
Lyrick and paſtorall.
Odes,
Eglogs,
The man in the Moone.
By MICHAELL DRAYTON
Eſquier.
AT LONDON,
Printed by R.B, for N.L. and I. Flaſket.

Title-page of Drayton's "Poemes," 1606

By general voice, in times that then was, grown
So excellent, that scarce there had been known
Him that excell'd in piping or in song.

Michael Drayton (1563–1631) was born at Hartshill, in Warwickshire. At the age of ten, being already ambitious to be a poet, he is believed to have entered the family of the highly cultivated Sir Henry Goodyer, at Polesworth, as page. He became known to the Countess of Bedford and to Sir Walter Aston, who permanently befriended him. We know nothing of the details of his early life. Early in 1591 Drayton was preparing to publish his earliest volume, a book of religious verse entitled *The Harmony of the Church*, when it was suppressed by the authorities, and one copy only has survived. In 1593 he published a volume of eclogues, entitled *Idea : The Shepherd's Garland*, in which he spoke of himself as Rowland, and described a love affair with a lady residing by the river Anker, in Warwickshire. This was further expanded in the sonnet-cycle of *Idea's Mirror* (1594). Drayton's publications now became very numerous. *Matilda* (1594), *Endimion and Phœbe* (1595 ?), *Mortimeriados*—afterwards revised as *The Barons' Wars* — (1596), and *England's Heroical Epistles*. Drayton's poetry, or else his person, was distasteful to King James, and when he laid his *Gratulatory Poem* at the feet of their arriving Majesties, the monarch, who had so graciously welcomed Daniel and Davys, rudely repulsed Drayton, whose work from this moment betrays a note of petulance and disappointment. The royal disfavour, however, does not seem to have affected Drayton's popularity, which was very great. In 1605 he began to collect his poetical works, and they were reprinted with a frequency which proves them to have been welcome to the public. In 1606 appeared the *Poems Lyric and Pastoral*. Drayton was now occupied for many years by his masterpiece of antiquarian ingenuity, the famous *Poly-Olbion*, the first eighteen "songs" of which were issued, with maps, and with notes by Selden, in 1612 ; the remaining twelve "songs" being added in 1622. In 1627 Drayton issued a small folio volume comprising some of the most natural and delightful of his compositions, such as *The Battle of Agincourt*



Title-page of Drayton's "Poly-Olbion," 1612

(quite distinct from the ode of that name); *Nimphidia, or the Court of Faery; The Quest of Cynthia; The Shepherd's Sirena;* and *The Moon Calf.* His latest work was a rather grotesque collection of "nymphalls" or pastorals, called *The Muses' Elysium* (1630); this volume contained, however, some of the daintiest fairy poetry in the language. Drayton died in London on December 23, 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The following sonnet, which is the most perfect thing that Drayton wrote, was published in 1619:

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
nd I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

From the very lively adventure of the fair Queen Mab on her visit to the fairy knight Pigwiggin, in *Nymphidia*, the following stanzas may be quoted as a favourable example of Drayton's easier vein:

She mounts her chariot with a trice,
Nor would she stay for no advice,
Until her maids, who were so nice,
To wait on her were fitted;
But ran herself away alone;
Which when they heard, there was not one
But hasted after to be gone,
As she had been dis-witted.

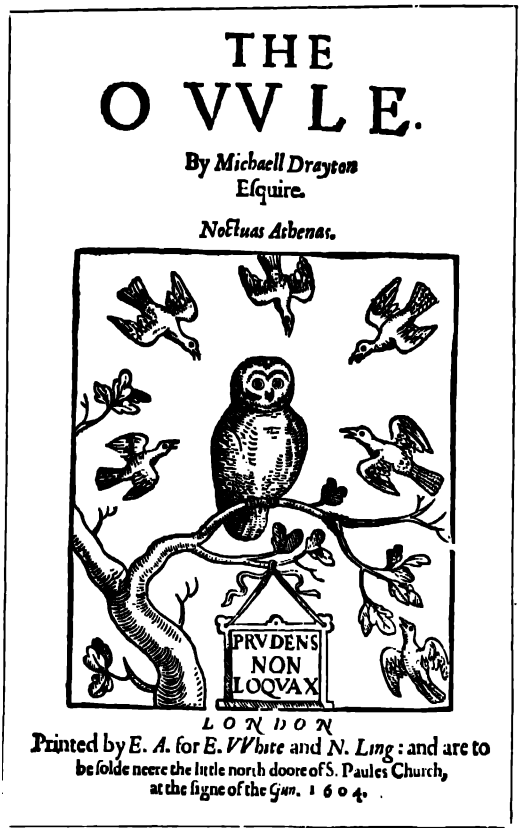
Hop and Mop and Drab so clear,
Pip and Trip and Skip, that were
Unto Mab, their sovereign dear,
Her special maids of honour;
Fib and Tib and Pink and Pin,
Tick and Quick and Jill and Jin,
Tit and Nit and Wap and Win—
The train that waited on her.

Upon a grasshopper they got,
And, what with amble and with trot,
For hedge or ditch they spared not,
But after her did hie them:
A cobweb over them they throw,
To shield the wind if it should blow;
Themselves they wisely could bestow
Lest any should espy them.

The Satirist

The closing years of the sixteenth century were marked by a curious attempt to introduce into English literature a school of satire founded on the imitation of Roman models. Narratives and diatribes directed against persons and institutions had, of course, always existed, and Spencer, in his

Mother Hubbard's Tale, and Drayton in his *Owl* and his *Moon-Calf*, produced belated specimens of the mediæval satire of allegory. But as a species of social poetry closely modelled on the practice of Horace, Juvenal and Persius, satire was not comprehended in Europe until after the dissemination of Casaubon's criticism of the Latin poets. In English, the movement began in 1593, and it scarcely can be said to have survived 1599; it therefore belongs properly to the Elizabethan rather than to the Jacobean period. As, however, it was principally cultivated by very young men, who became eminent for writings of a different character in later years, and as it possessed a tone eminently in contrast with the ideal and romantic colour of the earlier age, it is convenient to discuss it now.


THE
OVVLE.
By *Michaell Drayton*
Eſquire.
Noctuas Athenas.
PRVDENS
NON
LOQVAX
LONDON
Printed by *E. A.* for *E. VVhite* and *N. Ling*: and are to be ſolde neere the little north doore of S. Paules Church, at the ſigne of the *Gun*. 1604.

Title-page of Drayton's "Owle," 1604

The earliest of these Latin satires were those written, and widely circulated, but not printed, by Donne, who was twenty years of age when he composed the first three of his *Satires* in 1593. He was followed in composition, but preceded in publication, by Lodge, whose *Fig for Momus* belongs to 1595. Joseph Hall, whom we shall meet with again among the theologians, printed his books of *Virgidemiarum* in three instalments, in 1597–1599. Meanwhile Marston, the future dramatist, issued his satires, in two brochures, in 1598, and Edward Guilpin, of whom nothing more is known, his *Skialetheia* in the same year. These were the leaders among those who deliberately followed the model of Persius and Juvenal, and the result in the hands of these young poets of very various ultimate bias was curiously similar. These satires might almost be written by the same hand; it is difficult to distinguish a page of Marston from a page of Donne, or to decide at sight whether a certain passage is by Guilpin or by Hall. All of them cultivated a roughness which they supposed to be necessary in literature which should resemble "angry Juvenal" and "crabbèd Persius." Hall said: "It is not for every one to relish a true and natural satire, being of itself both hard of conceit and harsh of style." This notion of satire, as of necessity obscure and elliptical, violent and "tart," lasted until Milton, with his superior scholarship, exposed it. The group of coarse,

fuscous poems, however, contains some very picturesque writing, and preserves for us a gallery of grotesque contemporary portraits. There is an example of Joseph Hall's rude irony:

> O the fond boasting of vain-glorious man!
> Does he the best that may the best be seen?
> Who ever gives a pair of velvet shoes
> To the Holy Rood, or liberally allows
> But a new rope to ring the curfew-bell,
> But he desires that his great deed may dwell
> Or graven in the chancel-window glass,
> Or in a lasting tomb of plated brass?

Marston is often still more angry and more incoherent, and has not the same accent of sincerity:

> Ay, Philo, ay! I'll keep an open hall,
> A common, and a sumptuous festival:
> Welcome all eyes, all eyes, all tongues to me;
> Gnaw, peasants, on my scraps of poesy!
> Castalios, Cyprions, court-boys, Spanish blocks,
> Ribbanded cars, granado-netherstocks,
> Fiddlers and scriveners, pedlers, tinkering knaves,
> Base blue-coats, tapsters, broad-cloth-minded slaves,
> Welcome, i' faith, but may you ne'er depart
> Till I have made your galléd hides to smart.

This would require a long commentary completely to explain its allusions, although it is one of Marston's less obscure passages. The darkness of allusion and crabbedness of style were intentional; they were carried even further by Donne, of whom, however, it has to be said that while the satires of Hall were general invectives, and those of Marston and his group mainly fantastic libels against individuals, those of Donne were a series of humorous and sardonic portraits of types. This fact, and the eccentric violence of the poet's wilful versification, are exemplified in this picture of a walk in London streets with a young man of fashion:

> Now leaps he upright, jogs me, and cries, "Do you see
> Yonder well-favoured youth?" "Which?" "O, 'tis he
> That dances so divinely." "O," said I,
> "Stand still! Must you dance here for company?"
> He droop'd; we went, till one, which did excel
> Th' Indians in drinking his tobacco well,
> Met us. They talk'd. I whispered, "Let us go,
> It may be you smell him not? Truly, I do!"
> He hears not me, but, on the other side
> A many-coloured peacock having spied,
> Leaves him and me. I for my lost sheep stay;
> He follows, overtakes, goes on the way.

With the writings of those satirists must be connected a work which, though in dialogue, has no real dramatic character. This is the curious trilogy of *Parnassus*, a satirical review of the condition of English poetry at the close of the sixteenth century, which provided Cambridge students with entertainment on successive Christmas Days. The third of these plays was printed, as *The Return from Pernassus*, in 1606; the other two were preserved



Title-page of John Dowland's "Booke of Songes," 1597

among Hearne's MSS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and first printed by Mr. W. D. Macray in 1886. The anonymous author, who was possibly John Day, seems to have been a Cheshire man. A certain Furor Poeticus is introduced

to ridicule and parody the extravagance of writers like Kyd, and the ranting Marstons and Tourneurs of a later generation. The *Parnassus* is not only valuable for its insight into University life, but it contains outspoken criticisms, from the scholar's point of view, of most of the poets of the time. The great actors, Burbage and Kempe, are introduced on the stage, and the latter gives an amusing professional opinion on the pieces which were being submitted to him for acting:

> Few of the University [he says] pen plays well. They smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, ay, and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a petulant fellow! He brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

The reformation, or rather creation, of English song at the close of the reign of Elizabeth has been referred to in an earlier chapter. But its causes and the strange abruptness with which it came into full development remain imperfectly examined. What had caused it? No doubt the general efflorescence of feeling, the new enlightenment, the new passion of life, took this mode of expressing themselves, as they took others in other departments of intellectual behaviour. But this particular manifestation of tuneful, flowery fancy seems to have been connected with two artistic tendencies, the one the cultivation of music, the other the study of recent French verse. The former is the more easy to follow. The year 1588 had been the occasion of a sudden outburst of musical talent in this country; it is, approximately, the date of public recognition of the exquisite talent of Tallis, Bird, and Dowland, and the foundation of their school of national lute-melody. This species of chamber-music instantly became the fashion, and remained so for at least some quarter of a century. It was necessary to find words for these airs, and the poems so employed were obliged to be lucid, liquid, brief, and of a temper suited to the gaiety or sadness of the instrument. The demand created the supply, and from having been heavy and dissonant to a painful degree, English lyrics suddenly took a perfect art and sweetness. What is very strange is that there was no transition. As soon as a composer wanted a trill of pure song, such as a blackcap or a whitethroat might have supplied, anonymous bards, without the smallest training, were able to gush forth with—

> O Love, they wrong thee much
> That say thy sweet is bitter,
> When thy rich fruit is such
> As nothing can be sweeter.
> Fair house of joy and bliss,
> Where truest pleasure is,
> I do adore thee;
> I know thee what thou art,
> I serve thee with my heart,
> And fall before thee.

(a little miracle which we owe to Mr. Bullen's researches); or, in a still lighter key, with—

Now is the month of maying,
When merry lads are playing,
Each with his bonny lass,
Upon the greeny grass;
The Spring, clad all in gladness,
Doth laugh at Winter's sadness,
And to the bagpipe's sound
The nymphs tread out their ground.

This joyous semi-classical gusto in life, this ecstasy in physical beauty and frank pleasure, recalls the lyrical poetry of France in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the influence of the Pléiade on the song-writers and sonneteers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages is not questionable. It is, however, very difficult to trace this with exactitude. The spirit of Ronsard and of Remy Belleau, and something intangible of their very style, are discerned in Barnes and Drummond, but it would be dangerous to insist on this. A less important French writer, however, Philippe Desportes, enjoyed, as we know, a great popularity in England. Lodge says of him that he was "ordinarily in every man's hands," and direct paraphrases of the amatory and of the religious verse of Desportes are frequent.

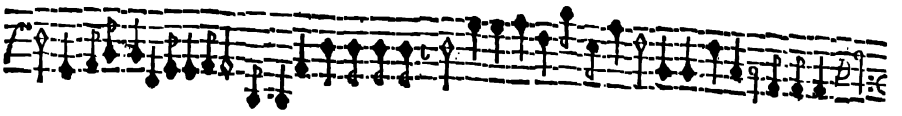
The trick of this light and brilliant sensuous verse once learned, it took forms the most various and the most delightful. In the hands of the best poets it rapidly developed from an extreme naïveté and artless jigging freedom to the fullest splendour of song. When Lodge, in 1590, could write—

Like to the clear in highest sphere,
Where all imperial beauty shines,
Of self-same colour is her hair,
Whether unfolded or in twines;
Heigh ho, fair Rosaline!
Her eyes are sapphires set in snow,
Refining heaven by every wink;
The gods do fear whenas they glow,
And I do tremble, when I think,
Heigh ho, would she were mine!

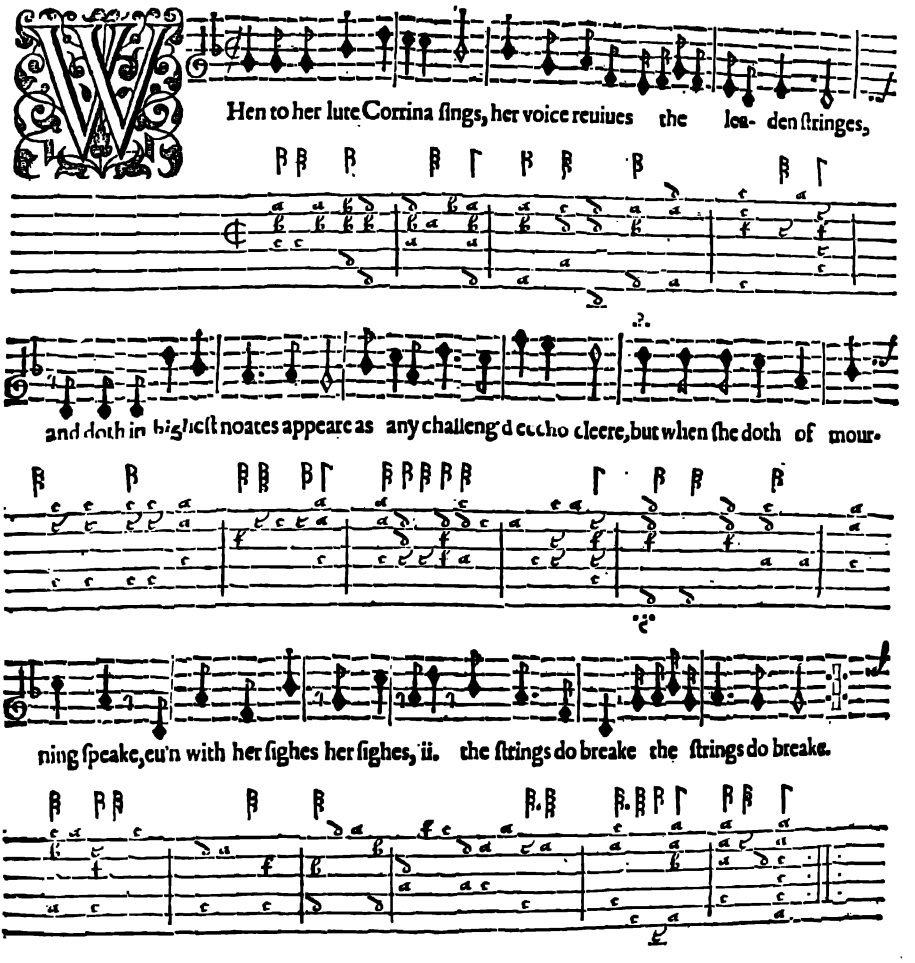
there was no technical lesson left for the English lyric to learn. But the old simplicity remained awhile side by side with this gorgeous and sonorous art, and to the combination we owe the songs of Shakespeare and THOMAS CAMPION, the pastorals of NICHOLAS BRETON, the marvellous short flights of verbal melody that star the music-books down to 1615 and even later. But then the flowers of English lyric began to wither, and the jewels took their place; a harder, less lucid, less spontaneous method of song-writing succeeded.

Of the early life of **Thomas Campion** (*d.* 1620) we know nothing, except that he was educated at Cambridge and was probably a member of Gray's Inn. In 1591 a wonderful lyric, containing the stanzas:

In myrtle arbours on the downs,
The fairy-queen Proserpina,
This night by moonshine leading merry rounds,
Holds a watch with sweet love
Down the dale, up the hill;
No plaints or groans may move
Their holy vigil.



VI.



And as her lute doth liue or die,
Led by her paſſion, ſo muſt I,
For when of pleaſure ſhe doth ſing,
My thoughts enioy a ſodaine ſpring,
But if ſhe doth of ſorrow ſpeake,
Eu'n from my hart the ſtrings doe breake.

A page of Music from Campion's "Book of Ayres," 1601

All you that will hold watch with love,
 The fairy-queen Proserpina
Will make you fairer than Dione's dove;
 Roses red, lilies white,
 And the clear damask hue
Shall on your cheeks unite:
 Love will adorn you,

appeared anonymously in an appendix to the *Astrophel and Stella* of Sidney. This was a very characteristic specimen of Campion's writing, who in 1595 published a volume of Latin *Poemata*, in which the author's preoccupation with the art of music is betrayed. The poet, however, had before this become a physician, and seems to have practised with success. His songs were published in successive *Books of Airs*, the first of which appeared in 1601, with the music, which was composed by the author himself and by Philip Rossiter the lutenist. Campion was a theorist on prosody, and in 1602 published prose *Observations on the Art of English Poesy*, in which he attacked "the vulgar and unartificial (*i.e.*, inartistic) custom of rhyming." Daniel and Ben Jonson wrote replies to this pamphlet. Later, Campion began to compose masques, and became second only to Jonson in this delicate exercise. That entitled *The Lords' Masque* (1613) contains the following song, to which the stars, summoned by Prometheus and Orpheus, "moved in an exceeding strange and delightful manner" in response to a neat mechanical artifice of Inigo Jones:

Advance your choral motions now,
 You music-loving lights;
This night concludes the nuptial vow—
 Make this the best of nights:
So bravely crown it with your beams
 That it may live in fame
As long as Rhenus or as Thames
 Are known by either name.

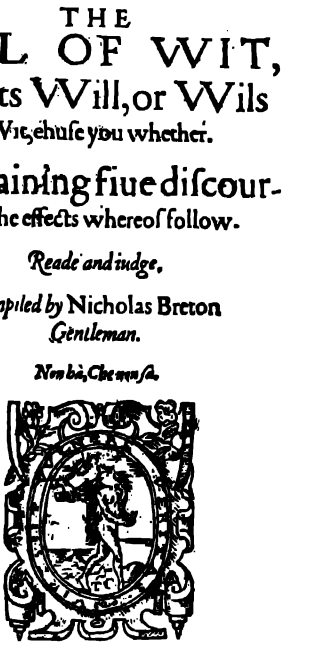
Once more again, yet nearer move
 Your forms at willing view;
Such fair effects of joy and love
 None can express but you.
Then revel midst your airy bowers
 Till all the clouds do sweat,
That pleasure may be poured in showers
 On this triumphant seat.

Long since hath lovely Flora thrown
 Her flowers and garlands here:
Rich Ceres all her wealth hath shown,
 Proud of her dainty cheer.
Changed, then, to human shape, descend,
 Clad in familiar weed,
That every eye may here commend
 The kind delights you breed.

Mr. Bullen believes that Campion wrote the *Entertainment at Brougham Castle* of 1618. He was now near the end of his career, for he died in London, probably of the plague, on March 1, 1620, and was buried the same day at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West. Campion was almost unknown, until, in 1887, Mr. Bullen revealed

to us the beauties of one of the most admirable song-writers of his age; the same historian has edited the works of Campion in 1889, and again in 1903.

Nicholas Breton (1542 ?–1626 ?) was the son of William Breton, a London tradesman, connected with a good Essex family, and claiming the title of "gentleman." He was educated at Oriel College, Oxford; his father died early, and his mother married again, making the poet George Gascoigne her son's stepfather. As early as 1577 Breton began to publish, and he was the author of more than fifty separate collections of prose and verse, many of which are lost. Breton was in the service of Sir Philip Sidney until his death, and then in that of the Countess of Pembroke. He appears to have grievously offended her, and to have fallen in consequence into miserable indigence, "going up and down like a shadow without substance, a purse without money, and a body without spirit." About the year 1601, however, she seems to have forgiven him, and he went on writing serenely until 1626, the year of the publication of his *Fantastics*, when he disappears. His artless, diffuse, and easy grace in lyric pastoral is seen at its best in *The Passionate Shepherd* of 1604, and in such songs as:


THE
WIL OF WIT,
Wits Will, or Wils
VVit, chuse you whether.
Containing fiue discourses, the effects whereof follow.
Reade and iudge.
Compiled by Nicholas Breton
Gentleman.
Nemò, Che mmsa.
LONDON
Printed by Thomas Creede.
1599.

Title-page of Nicholas Breton's "The Will of Wit," 1599

Good Muse, rock me asleep
With some sweet harmony;
This weary eye is not to keep
Thy wary company.

Sweet Love, be gone awhile!
Thou knowest my heaviness;
Beauty is born but to beguile
My heart of happiness.

See how my little flock,
That loved to feed on high,
Do tumble headlong down the rock,
And in the valley die.

The bushes and the trees,
That were so fresh and green,
Do all their dainty colour leese [lose],
And not a leaf is seen.

The blackbird and the thrush,
That made the woods to ring,
With all the rest, are now at hush,
And not a note they sing.

The publication of the *Faery Queene*, with its languid passion and voluptuous romance, produced a very vivid influence on the minds of several young poets, who received the stamp of Spenser's genius in their adolescence, and did

not lose it in their advancing years. The great charm of the stanza which Spenser had invited,—"a measure," as Shelley said long afterwards, "inexpressibly beautiful," fascinated several of these youthful poets, but, with the metrical restlessness of the age, none of them were content to accept it as Spenser had left it, in the brilliancy and magnificence of its perfection. They introduced modifications of it, leaving out one line (as Giles Fletcher and the author of *Britain's Ida*), or the two central lines of the stanza (as in *The Purple Island*); or, while retaining the nine lines, slightly rearranging the rhymes (as Phineas Fletcher in the *Piscatory Eclogues*). These alterations, however, left Spenser's noble stanza, — the Chaucerian narrative stanza enlarged by an alexandrine,—the aim and model of their style. With this, all these poets endeavoured to reproduce, without direct imitation but in harmony with their individual talent, the sumptuousness and magic of their model. Their sense of beauty, however, was in no case so pure as it had been in Spenser, and these interesting writers display the tendency towards decay which was already, early in the reign of James I., threatening to invade English poetry. They are uplifted in imagination, but their fancy takes shorter and abrupter flights, and they are easily diverted by what is extravagant and preposterous. Their love for what is comely and noble raises them often to genuine heights, from which they suddenly descend into tastelessness.



LONDON
Printed by ROBERT RAVVORTH, and are to be ſold by *Iohn wright*, at his ſhop neere Chriſt-Church gate. 1607.

Title-page of Nicholas Breton's "A Murmurer." 1607

In this group of the disciples of Spenser, the predominant talent is that of GILES FLETCHER, to whom, indeed, the rarer quality of genius can scarcely be denied. He was the author of the finest religious poem produced in England between the *Vision of Piers Plowman* and *Paradise Lost*. In several passages of his fourfold *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, Giles Fletcher solved the difficult problem of how to be at once gorgeous and yet simple, majestic and yet touching. At his apogee he surpasses his very master, for his imagination lifts him to a spiritual sublimity. In the beatific vision in his fourth canto we are reminded of no lesser poem than the *Paradiso*:

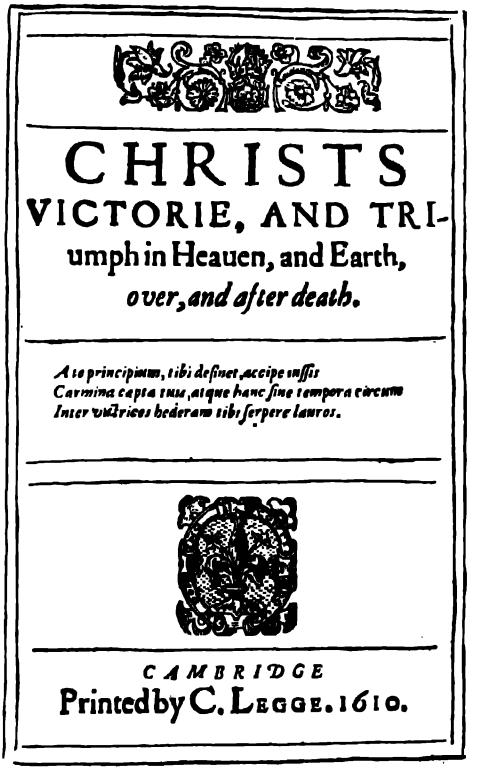
Toss up your heads, ye everlasting gates,
And let the Prince of Glory enter in!
At whose brave volley of siderial states
The sun to blush and stars grow pale were seen;
When leaping first from Earth he did begin

To climb his angel's wings. Then, open hang
Your crystal doors! so, all the chorus sang
Of heavenly birds, as to the stars they nimbly sprang.

Hark! how the floods clap their applauding hands;
The pleasant valleys singing for delight;
The wanton mountains dance about the lands,
The while the fields, struck with the heavenly light,
Set all their flowers a-smiling at the sight;
The trees laugh with their blossoms, and the sound
Of the triumphant shout of praise that crowned
The flaming Lamb, breaking through Heaven, hath passage found.

Out leap the antique patriarchs, all in haste,
To see the powers of Hell in triumph led,
And with small stars a garland interchased
Of olive-leaves they love, to crown His head,
That was before with thorns disgloried:
After them flew the prophets, brightly stoled
In shining lawn, and wimpled manifold,
Striking their ivory harps, strung all in chords of gold.

To which the saints victorious carols sung,
Ten thousand saints at once; that with the sound
The hollow vault of heaven for triumph rung;
The cherubim their clamours did confound
With all the rest, and clapped their wings around;
Down from their thrones the dominations flow,
And at His feet their crowns and sceptres throw,
And all the princely souls fell on their faces low.


CHRISTS
VICTORIE, AND TRIumph in Heauen, and Earth,
over, and after death.

A te principium, tibi desinet, accipe iussis
Carmina capta tuis, atque hanc sine tempora circum
Inter victrices hederam tibi serpere lauros.

CAMBRIDGE
Printed by C. Legge. 1610.

Title-page of Giles Fletcher's "Christs Victorie," 1610

The sonorous purity and elevation of Giles Fletcher at his best give more than a hint of the approaching Milton, who was himself to belong, in his early youth and particularly in his odes, to the group of Spenserians. In *Christ's Victory and Triumph* we find the widely popular Spenserian tradition at its highest. It is right to say that these splendours are not sustained, and that Giles Fletcher is often florid and sometimes merely trivial. PHINEAS FLETCHER is still more open to censure in matter of taste, and although in his way a genuine poet, never rises to his brother's white heat of imagination. His famous *Purple Island* is really a work of the decadence, and, although vivacious, varied and marvellously ingenious, is a hopeless attempt to embroider

with beautiful language and fantastic images a theme—the physiology of the human body—which is radically grotesque and arid as a subject for poetry. Another Spenserian of looser and more languid talent was WILLIAM BROWNE, who adopted a fluid pastoral sweetness and wrote mainly in the heroic couplet. He is most to be valued for his occasional felicities, his happy vignettes of country life, his touches of landscape. But his unfinished masterpiece, *Britannia's Pastorals*, is incoherent, and sometimes mawkish.

The Fletchers were a family largely endowed with literary talent. Richard Fletcher, of Cranbrook, had two sons, each of whom became eminent. Of these one was Richard (*d.* 1596), who was Mary Queen of Scots' chaplain at Fotheringay, and who died Bishop of London; his son was John Fletcher, the famous playwright. The brother of the bishop was Giles Fletcher the elder (1549–1611), who went as envoy to Russia, printed a dangerous and able book on that country in 1591, and appeared in 1593 among the sonnet-writers as the author of a cycle entitled *Licia*. He married Joan Sheafe, and their two sons were the leaders of the Spenserian school. The elder, **Phineas Fletcher** (1582–1650), was born at Cranbrook on April 8, 1582, was educated at Eton, and became a scholar of King's College, Cambridge, in 1600. He resided at the University for sixteen years, having been elected a fellow of his college. After acting as chaplain in the Willoughby household for some time, Phineas Fletcher settled down in Norfolk for the rest of his life as Rector of Hilgay, where he died towards the close of 1650. It is unexplained why he did not publish his poems, which bear the impress of youth, until late in life. But his earliest publication, the *Locustæ*, belongs to 1627, and the *Sicelides* to 1631. Finally, his important works, *The Purple Island* and the *Piscatory Eclogues*, were delayed until 1633. An idea of the forms by which Phineas is principally known may be given by a stanza from each of these writings. The following exemplifies the *Piscatory Eclogues*:

A fisher-boy that never knew his peer
 In dainty songs, the gentle Thomalin,
With folded arms, deep sighs and heavy cheer,
 Where hundred nymphs, and hundred muses inn,
Sank down by Camus' brinks; with him his dear
 Dear Thyrsil lay; ofttimes would he begin
To cure his grief, and better way advise;
But still his words, when his sad friend he spies,
 Forsook his silent tongue, to speak in watery eyes.

While this is the stanza in which *The Purple Island* is composed:

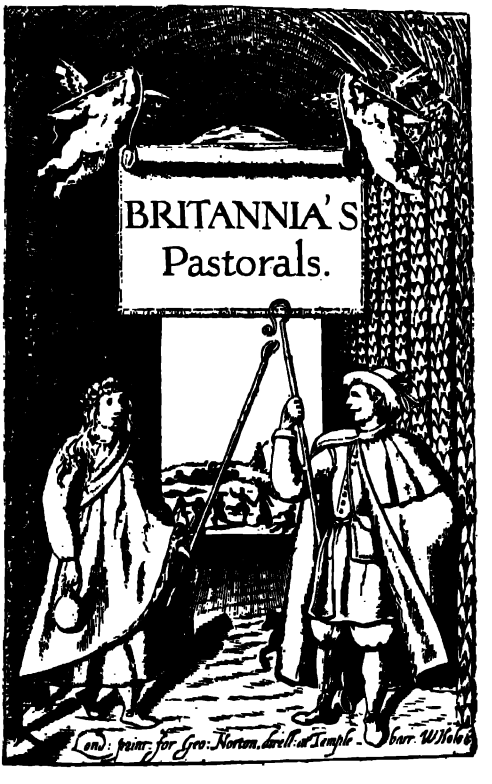
The morning fresh, dappling her horse with roses,
 Vexed at the lingering shades, that long had left her
In Tithon's freezing arms, the light discloses,
 And, chasing night, of rule and harm bereft her,
The sun with gentle beams his rage disguises,
And, like aspiring tyrants, temporises,
 Never to be endured, but when he falls or rises.

Giles Fletcher, the younger (1584?–1623?), was the brother of Phineas, and was probably born in London not later than 1584. He was sent early to Westminster School, and thence in 1605 to Trinity College, Cambridge, by the generous kindness of the famous Dr. Thomas Neville, who was Master of that

college from 1593–1615. His earliest verses, which are of a rare maturity, and display already the stanzaic adaptation of the Spenserian form which Giles Fletcher was afterwards to make prominent, appeared in 1603 in a collection called *Sorrow's Joy*, of poems on the death of Queen Elizabeth. In this "canto" the youthful poet gives remarkable promise, as a single specimen may serve to show :

So let the loathèd lapwing, when her nest
Is stolen away, not as she uses, fly,
Cozening the searcher of his promised feast,
But, widowed of all hope, still "Itys" cry,
And naught but "Itys, Itys!" till she die.
Say, sweetest quirester of the airy quire,
Doth not thy "Tereu, Tereu!" then expire,
When winter robs thy house of all her green attire?

At Trinity College, where Giles Fletcher became a bachelor of divinity, he was famous for being "equally beloved of the Muses and the Graces." In 1610 he published the poem on which his fame rests, *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth;* in spite of its transcendent beauties, it was coldly received, and was the object of "malicious tongues." But at least Milton read it. Fletcher, however, was discouraged, and about 1617 he exchanged his living in Cambridge for the rectory of Alderton, in Suffolk, where his "clownish and low-parted parishioners valued not their pastor according to his worth." Their stubbornness "disposed him to melancholy and hastened his dissolution." He issued no more verse, but a prose treatise of divinity, *The Reward of the Faithful*, in 1623. This dim record of the life of Giles Fletcher leaves upon us the impression of a man whose powers were early paralysed by the inexplicable neglect of his contemporaries.



Title-page of "Britannia's Pastorals," 1613

William Browne (1591?–1643) was born at Tavistock, and is believed to have belonged to an old Devonshire family, the Brownes of Browne-Ilash. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, but left the University without a degree, entering Clifford's Inn, in London, as a law student. Thence he went over to the Inner Temple in the winter of 1611. In 1613 appeared the First Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, a work in which the talent of a very young man is displayed in its crude exuberance. In 1614 Browne issued the collection of eclogues called

The Shepherd's Pipe, and in 1616 a Second Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, into whose service he had now entered; Anthony à Wood says that he settled at Wilton, where "he got wealth and purchased an estate," but this is doubtful. A William Browne, who may be the poet, was buried at Tavistock on March 27, 1643; but the widow of the latter did not obtain administration of his estate at Dorking until 1645. Browne was small in stature, and a favourite with his friends, among whom were Drayton and Selden, One of his most agreeable works, the *Inner Temple Masque*, remained in MS. until 1772, and a Third Book of *Britannia's Pastorals* until 1852. The following exquisite epitaph, first printed in 1658, and long attributed to Ben Jonson, is now known to be the work of Browne:



George Wither

From the portrait by John Payne in the "Emblemes" 1634

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE

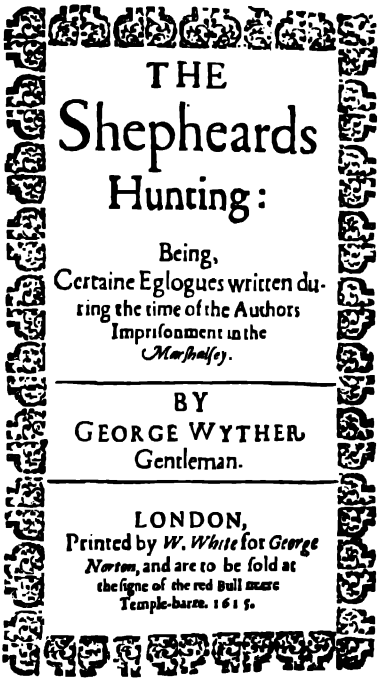
Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Fair and learn'd and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

It is difficult to find an appropriate place in our record for GEORGE WITHER, whose figure is very prominent from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Charles II., but so protean are its inconsistencies, and so violently various, that it belongs to a succession of periods rather than to any one. For convenience, however, we may consider the poems of Wither in succession to those of the disciples of Spenser, with whom he preserved close relations for some time. At his best Wither is a lyric poet of very remarkable freshness, brightness and charm; at his worst he is a poetaster pouring forth absolute trash. In no writer in our literature do we meet with such violent extremes of merit, and Wither appears to have been devoid, not indeed of genius, but of the rudiments of a controlling taste. Moreover, during his long life he showed himself sensitive without intelligence to the trend of popular feeling, so that when the public demanded airy and exquisite pastoral songs, about 1610, Wither could pro-

duce them ; and when, after the Restoration, all sense of style and dignity was lost in popular verse, Wither could, with absolute complacency, publish doggerel such as his *Tuba Pacifica* and his *Sighs for the Pitchers*. His life was so long, his works so extremely numerous and their value so irregular, that the best critical opinion has always separated the chaff from the grain before beginning to estimate Wither's value. This being done, he appears as the author, between 1612 and 1630, of a number of little books of verse, containing eclogues, songs and epistles of great picturesqueness, occasionally rising into really eminent beauty. In this mood, Wither knows that

> . . . though all the world's delight forsake me,
> I have a Muse, and she shall music make me ;
> Whose very notes, in spite of closest cages,
> Shall give content to me and after ages.

But the irregularity of his inspiration is remarkable even in his earliest works, where, as has been said, the purple passages are often stitched into a ground of the coarsest sacking. The faults of Wither were repeated by FRANCIS QUARLES, the extremely popular writer of scriptural paraphrases, epitaphs and emblems, in whom the prosaic qualities of the seventeenth century first appear in their open and pronounced form. Slovenly and tasteless as Quarles was, he had nevertheless a vigour and homely wit, which should save him from absolute ridicule. His ardour did not always betray him into the grotesque, and he is occasionally dignified as well as spirited. The majority of his writings, however, are disfigured by the most preposterous faults of style, and awaken something like bewilderment in a reader who recollects that they were written by a man who was born before Spenser died.


THE
Shepheards
Hunting:
Being,
Certaine Eglogues written during the time of the Authors Imprisonment in the *Marshalsey*.
BY
GEORGE WYTHER
Gentleman.
LONDON,
Printed by *W. White* for *George Norton*, and are to be sold at the signe of the red Bull neare Temple-barre. 1615.

Title-page of Wither's "Shepheards Hunting," 1615

George Wither (1588–1667) was born at Bentworth, in Hampshire, on June 11, 1588. His parents, who were in easy circumstances, sent him to the village school of Colemore, and then to Magdalen College, Oxford. He went back to Bentworth, and, whatever that may mean, "to the plough." But about 1612 he went up to London, and began to devote himself to literature, and in 1613 was imprisoned in the Marshalsea for printing his satire called *Abuses Stript and Whipt*. While in prison he wrote *The Shepherd's Hunting* and *Fidelia*, two of his most successful works, each published in 1615. *The Mistress of Philarete*

belongs to the same period, but was not printed until 1622. In this poem occurs the description of the poet's Hampshire home, and in particular of Alresford Pool:



George Wither
After the portrait by W. Holle

Two pretty rills do meet, and meeting make
Within one valley a large silver lake;
About whose banks the fertile mountains stood
In ages passëd, bravely crowned with wood;
Which, lending cold, sweet shadows, gave it grace
To be accounted Cynthia's bathing-place;
And from her father Neptune's brackish court
Fair Thetis thither often would resort,
Attended by the fishes of the sea,
Which in these sweeter waters come to play.
There would the Daughter of the Sea-god dive;
And thither came the land-nymphs, every eve,
To wait upon her, bringing for her brows
Rich garlands of sweet flowers and beechy boughs.
For pleasant was that pool, and near it there
Was neither rotten marsh nor boggy fen.
It was not overgrown with boisterous sedge,
Nor grew there rudely, then, along the edge,
A bending willow nor a prickly bush,
Nor broad-leafed flag, nor reed, nor knotty rush,
But here, well-ordered, was a grove with bowers,
There, grassy plots set round about with flowers;
Here you might, through the water, see the land
Appear, strewn o'er with white or yellow sand.
Yon, deeper was it; and the wind, by whiffs,
Would make it rise, and wash the little cliffs;
On which, oft pluming, sate, unfrighted than,
The gaggling wild-goose and the snow-white swan,
With all those flocks of fowls which, to this day,
Upon those quiet waters breed and play.

At the breaking out of the Civil War, Wither's sympathies were originally on the side of the King, and he led a regiment of cavalry against the Scotch Covenanters.

But he was a Puritan by conviction, and in 1642 he definitely came over to the Parliamentarian side, and was made Governor of Farnham Castle. His literary productions became more numerous than ever, but they consisted either of hymns and religious exercises or of violent political diatribes. He cultivated the extravagant nomenclature of the day, and the titles of his later pamphlets vary from *Opobalsamum Anglicanum* to *Salt upon Salt*. His violence grew with years, and the Restoration deprived his temper of its last shred of self-control. He was imprisoned in Newgate for libel in 1660, and left there, as being out of harm's way, for several years. He was infinitely active with the pen, however, during this period, and published nine or ten volumes while he was in prison. He was released at last, and died obscurely in London, being close upon his eightieth year, on May 2, 1667.



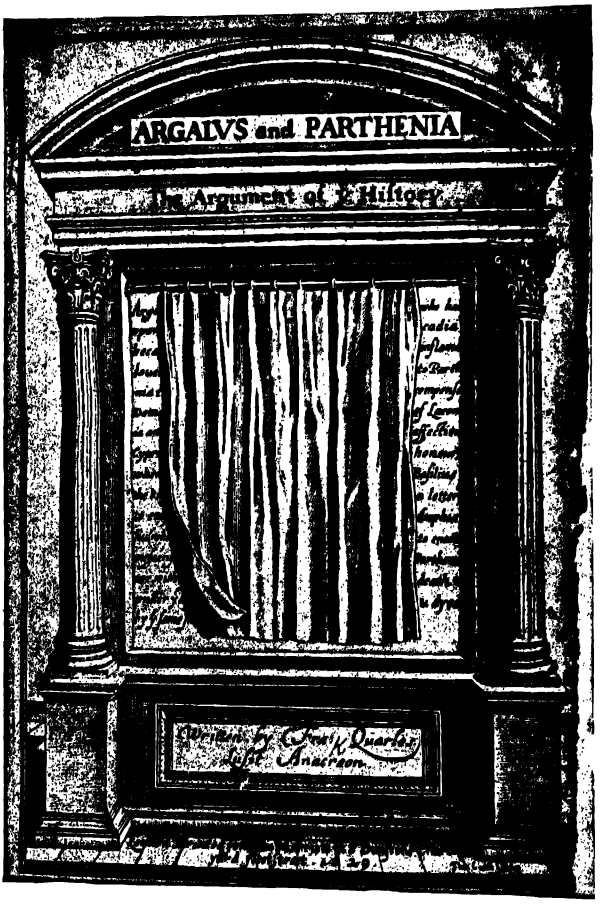
Title-page of Wither's "Juvenilia," 1622



Francis Quarles
From an engraving by Alais

Francis Quarles (1592–1644) was a gentleman of good family, born at the manor-house of Stewards, in Essex, in May 1592. He was early left an orphan, and was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, afterwards entering Lincoln's Inn. When the Princess Elizabeth married the Palatine and proceeded to Germany in 1613, Quarles accompanied her as cup-bearer, and appears to have lived abroad in her service for several years. In 1620, however, he was back in London, and published *A Feast for Worms*, a metrical version of the book of Jonah. His publications now became exceedingly numerous, and among the most popular of them were *Sion's Sonnets* (1625), *Argalus and Parthenia* (1629),

and *Emblems* (1634–1635). It is not known at what date previous to 1629 Quarles became the private secretary to Archbishop Ussher in Ireland. He was appointed Chronologer to the city of London in 1639, and from the outbreak of the war to the end of his life was a fervent royalist. He defended Charles I. with such ardour that his MSS. were confiscated and burned and he himself was in much danger. His extreme popularity among Puritan readers, however, preserved Quarles from personal attack, and he died in London before the struggle was decided on September 8, 1644, and was buried in the church of St. Olave, Silver Street. His solitary drama, the tragedy of *The Virgin Widow*, appeared posthumously in 1649. That homeliness of Quarles which so endeared him to his contemporaries may be exemplified by the following passage:



Title-page of Quarles's "Argalus and Parthenia," 1629

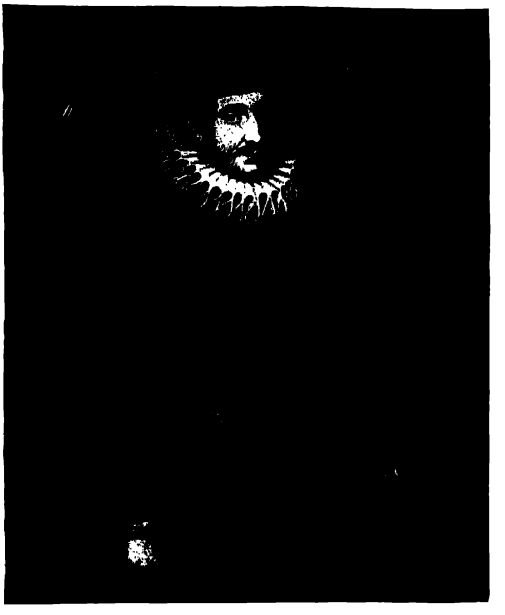
Even like the hawk, whose keeper's wary hands
Have made a prisoner to her weathering stock,
Forgetting quite the power of her fast bands,
Makes a rank bate from her forsaken block,
But her too-faithful leash doth soon restrain
Her broken flight, attempted oft in vain;
It gives her loins a twitch, and tugs her back again.

So, when my soul directs her better eye
To heaven's bright palace, where my treasure lies,
I spread my willing wings, but cannot fly;
Earth hauls me down; I cannot, cannot rise;
When I but strive to mount the least degree,
Earth gives a jerk, and foils me on my knee;
Lord! how my soul is rackt betwixt the world and thee!

Great God, I spread my feeble wings in vain;
In vain I offer my extended hands
I cannot mount till thou unlink my chain;
I cannot come till thou release my bands.
Which if Thou please to break, and then supply
My wings with spirit, the eagle shall not fly
A pitch that's half so fair nor half so swift as I.

Another isolated figure in the period we are now considering is **Fulke Greville,** afterwards the first Lord **Brooke** (1554–1628), who was a late survival from the chivalry of the early Elizabethan age. He had left his ancestral house of Beauchamp Court, in Warwickshire, at the age of ten, to enter Shrewsbury School, and had met a fellow pupil arriving on the same day, the young Philip Sidney. They were not divided in affection until Sidney died, although when the latter went to Oxford, Greville became a fellow commoner at Jesus College, Cambridge. The friends met again at the Court of Elizabeth, and there was added to their close confraternity another poet, Sir Edward Dyer, who was to die in 1607. The three were inseparable, and on one occasion when he had been for a moment divided from Dyer and Greville and was reunited to them, Sidney sang :

Welcome my two to me,
The number best belovèd ;
Within my heart you be
In friendship unremovèd.
Join hands and hearts, so let it be ;
Make but one mind in bodies three.

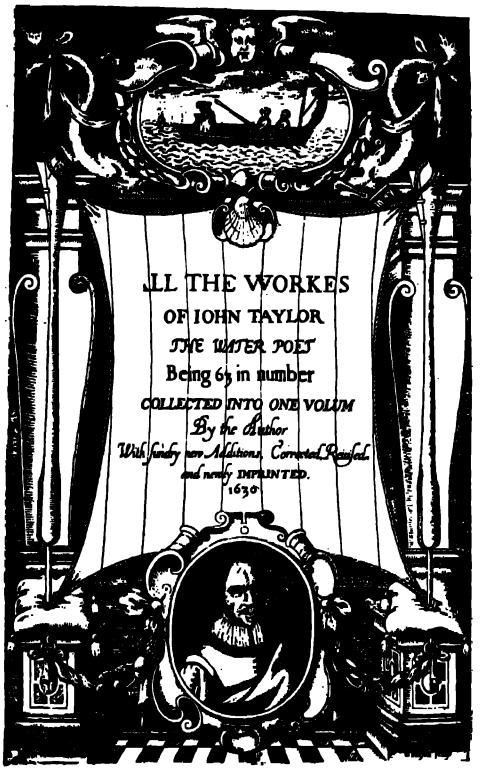


Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke
After an original portrait

Greville was the survivor of this romantic trinity. He adopted politics as a profession, and rose to high honours under Elizabeth, who greatly esteemed him. He was Secretary to the Principality of Wales for forty-five years, and in 1597 he was knighted. Fulke Greville rose to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1614, and was raised to the peerage, as Baron Brooke, in 1621. James I. gave him two magnificent and historic estates, Warwick Castle and Knoll Park. His end was mysterious ; he was stabbed in the back by a footman, in his bed-chamber while he was dressing, in September 1628 ; the murderer committed suicide before any explanation of his crime could be extracted from him. With the exception of a few verses in anthologies and the surreptitious edition of part of *Mustapha* in 1609, nothing of Lord Brooke's was published in his lifetime. It was not until 1633 that *Certain Learned and Elegant Works* appeared in folio ; this contained some philosophical " treatises " in verse, a cycle of sonnets entitled *Cælica*, and the two tragedies of *Alaham* and *Mustapha*. In 1652 was published Fulke Greville's belated *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, and more philosophical poems in 1670. The poetry of Lord Brooke is extremely abstruse and obscure, harsh in construction, with what a contemporary critic called " a close, mysterious, and sententious way of writing." As far as we can judge, the earliest, and certainly the simplest, of his writings which we possess are the sonnets. Lamb said that his plays were " frozen " ; they have rhyme introduced into them, and move slowly under a burden of ripe and solemn thought. But Brooke neglects

lucidity, melody, and colour more resolutely than any other English poet of his rank, and his poems were obviously written, in proud disdain of public taste, to please no one but himself. The ingenuity of Lord Brooke is exemplified at its best in this quatorzain from *Cælica :*

Satan, no woman, yet a wandering spirit,
 When he saw ships sail two ways with one wind,
Of sailors' trade he hell did disinherit—
 The Devil himself loves not a half-fast mind.
The satyr, when he saw the shepherd blow
 To warm his hands and make his pottage cool,
Manhood forswore and, half a beast, did know
 Nature with double breath is put to school.
Cupid doth head his shafts in women's faces,
 Where smiles and tears dwell ever near together,
Where all the arts of change give passion graces ;
 While these clouds threaten, who fears not the weather ?
Sailors and satyrs, Cupid's knights, and I
Fear women that swear " Nay ! " and know they lie.

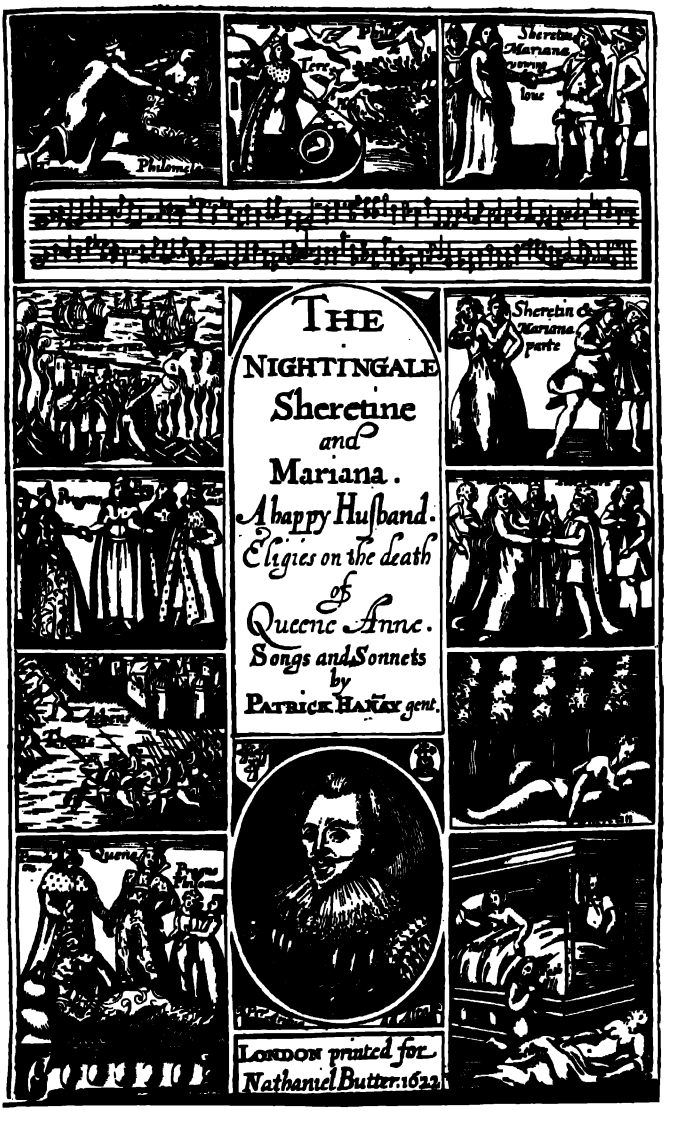


Title-page of the Works of the Water Poet

A poetical oddity of much voluble talent was **John Taylor** (1580–1653), called " The Water Poet," because he was a Thames waterman by profession ; he was patronised by Ben Jonson and by the Court, and arranged the aquatic pageants which was a picturesque feature of the age. In the course of his life, the Water Poet issued nearly one hundred and thirty separate publications. He was a sort of public jester, and in 1620 was received in that capacity by the Queen of Bohemia, who entertained him at Prague. Taylor collected his queer doggerel into his " Works " in 1630. A certain interest, not wholly literary, attaches also to the poetry of Master **Patrick Hannay,** who was drowned at sea about 1629. His books were collected in 1622.

But a poet was in the field who was to sweep the pleasant flowers of the disciples of Spenser before him as ruthlessly as a mower cuts down the daisies with his scythe. In this age of mighty wits and luminous imaginations, the most robust and the most elaborately trained intellect was surely that of JOHN DONNE. Born as early as 1573, and associated with many of the purely Elizabethan poets, we have yet the habit of thinking of him as wholly Jacobean,

and the instinct is not an erroneous one, for he begins a new age. His poems were kept in manuscript until two years after his death in 1631, but they were widely circulated, and they exercised an extraordinary effect. Long before any edition of Donne was published, the majority of living English verse-writers had been influenced by the main peculiarities of his style. He wrote satires, epistles, elegies, sonnets, and lyrics, and although it is in the last mentioned that his beauties are most frequent, the essence of Donne, the strange personal characteristic which made him so unlike every one else, is redolent in all. He rejected whatever had pleased the Elizabethan age; he threw the fashionable humanism to the winds; he broke up the accepted prosody; he aimed at a totally new method in diction, in illustration, in attitude. He was a realist, who studded his writings with images drawn from contemporary life. For grace and mellifluous floridity he substituted audacity, intensity, a proud and fulgurant darkness, as of an intellectual thundercloud. He thought to redeem poetry from triviality by a transcendental exercise of mental force, applied with violence to the most unpromising subjects, chosen sometimes merely because they were unpromising, in an insolent rejection of the traditions of plastic beauty. He conceived nothing



Title-page of Patrick Hannay's Poems, with portrait of the Author

less daring than a complete revolution of style, and the dethronement of the whole dynasty of modern verse, in favour of a new naturalism dependent solely on a blaze of intellect.

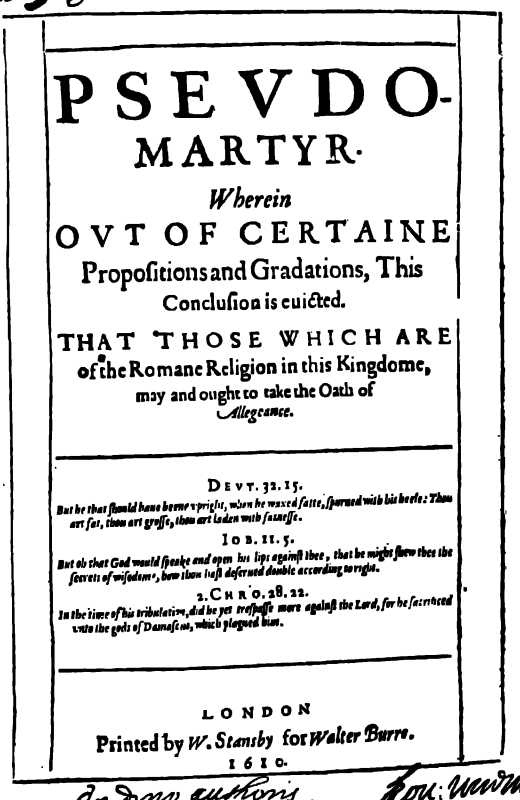
Unfortunately, the genius of Donne was not equal to his ambition and his force. He lacked the element needed to fuse his brilliant intuitions into a classical shape. He aimed at becoming a great creative reformer, but he succeeded only in disturbing and dislocating literature. He was the blind Samson in the Elizabethan gate, strong enough to pull the beautiful temple of Spenserian fancy about the ears of the worshippers, but powerless to offer them a substitute. What he gave to poetry in exchange for what he destroyed was almost wholly deplorable. For sixty years the evil taint of Donne rested on us, and our tradition is not free from it yet. To him—almost to him alone—we owe the tortured irregularities, the monstrous pedantries, the alembicated verbiage of the decline. "Rhyme's sturdy cripple," as Coleridge called him, Donne is the father of all that is exasperating, affected, and "metaphysical" in English poetry. He represented, with Marino in Italy, Gongora in Spain, and Du Bartas and D'Aubigné in France, that mania for an inflamed and eccentric extravagance of fancy which was racing over Europe like a hideous new disease; and the ease and rapidity with which the infection was caught shows how ready the world of letters was to succumb to such a plague. That Donne, in flashes, and especially in certain of his lyrics, is still able to afford us imaginative ecstasy of the very highest order—he has written a few single lines almost comparable with the best of Shakespeare's—must not blind us, in a general survey, to the maleficence of his genius. No one has injured English writing more than Donne, not even Carlyle.



John Donne
From a contemporary engraving by Lombart

John Donne (1573–1631) was born in the parish of St. Nicholas Olave, in the City. He was the eldest son of a citizen and ironmonger of London of the same name, who died early in 1576, and left three children to the charge of their mother, Elizabeth Heywood, who was of the family of the great Sir Thomas More, and the daughter of John Heywood, the epigrammatist and writer of interludes. On both sides the family of Donne was Catholic, and during his childhood, his uncles Elizæus (or Ellis) and Jasper Heywood, both men of literary attainments, were persecuted for their faith. Donne was so brilliantly precocious that it was said of him that "this age hath brought forth another Pico della Mirandola." In

October 1584 he and his younger brother Henry were entered at Hart Hall, Oxford. By advice from his Roman friends, he forebore to take a degree, and left the University in 1587, being then only fourteen years of age. He proceeded to Cambridge, where he took his degree; in 1590 removed to London and entered Lincoln's Inn in May 1592. His brother, Henry Donne, was arrested in May 1593 for harbouring a proscribed Catholic priest, and died of fever in prison. When, therefore, Donne came of age in 1594 he had to divide the very considerable fortune which his father had left with his mother and his sister, now Mrs. Copley. He now began to examine the basis of his faith, and gradually left the Church of Rome; he "betrothed himself to no religion that might give him any other denomination than a Christian." He began to devote himself to poetry, and he made his maiden efforts in satire. The year 1593 is the date of his earliest exercises in this kind, of which some account has already been given. He did not publish anything at this time, and on June 1, 1599, the power of doing so was removed from him by an order from the Archbishop's court "that no Satires or Epigrams be printed hereafter." Donne engaged himself under the Earl of Essex for the Cadiz expedition in 1596 and that made to the Azores in 1597. His experiences in the latter are enshrined in two remarkable poems, *The Storm* and *The Calm*. Instead of returning from the Azores to England, Donne visited Spain and Italy, remaining "some years" in the South of Europe. There is here, perhaps, some exaggeration, for in the winter of 1597 Donne was already settled in London, in York House, as private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton (afterwards Lord Ellesmere), the Lord Keeper. It is probable that by this time, and during his years of wandering adventure, the greater part of Donne's lyrical poems had been composed. At the death of Lady Egerton, the Lord Keeper's niece, Anne More, came to conduct his household. She and Donne fell in love with one another, and at the close of 1601 they were secretly married. This business being disclosed, Sir George More, the father of the bride, demanded that Donne should be dismissed from his appointment and thrown into the Fleet Prison, where he lay for some weeks. He had recently



PSEVDO-
MARTYR.

Wherein

OVT OF CERTAINE
Propoſitions and Gradations, This
Concluſion is euicted.

THAT THOSE WHICH ARE
of the Romane Religion in this Kingdome,
may and ought to take the Oath of
Allegeance.

DEVT. 32. 15.
But he that ſhould haue beene vpright, when he waxed fatte, ſpurned with his heele: Thou art fat, thou art groſſe, thou art laden with fatneſſe.

IOB. 11. 5.
But oh that God would ſpeake and open his lips againſt thee, that he might ſhew thee the ſecrets of wiſedome, how that is far deferued double according to right.

2. CHRO. 28. 22.
In the time of his tribulation, did he yet treſpaſſe more againſt the Lord, for he ſacrificed vnto the gods of Damaſcus, which plagued him.

LONDON
Printed by *W. Stansby* for *Walter Burre.*
1610.

Title-page of the "Pseudo-Martyr," 1610, with Donne's handwriting

completed a treatise in verse on the Pythagorean theory of metempsychosis, called *The Progress of the Soul*, which is one of the most brilliant and reckless of his writings, and the most lengthy of his existing poems. How Donne supported his wife and himself, and where he resided, from 1602 to 1605, is not clearly known, but during a part of this time they were the guests of Sir Francis Wooley at Pyrford. They moved in the last-named year to a small manor-house at Mitcham, a discomfortable and unhealthy dwelling. At this time and until 1607 Donne was helping Morton, long afterwards Bishop of Durham, in his controversies with the Catholics. When this work was ended, Morton proposed to his helper that he should enter the Church of England, in which he offered him instant promotion. This offer, however, Donne was not prepared to accept, and with "faint breath and perplexed countenance" thankfully declined it. His refusal did the more honour to the scrupulosity of his conscience in that, by some decay or early waste of his fortune, Donne was now reduced to the very straits of poverty. It was at the climax of sickness and indigence that he wrote, about 1608, the singular treatise on suicide called *Biathanatos*, in which, frankly confessing that the temptation to put an end to his life was often present with him, he tried to prove that "self-homicide is not so naturally sin that it may never be otherwise." At this juncture, however, Sir George More tardily forgave his daughter, and gave the Donnes a handsome allowance. In 1610 Donne published his prose treatise called *Pseudo-Martyr*, and in 1611 he wrote his curious squib against the Jesuits, called *Ignatius his Conclave*. To this time, also, may be attributed his two cycles of *Holy Sonnets*, in which the majesty of his sombre imagination is finely exemplified:

> At the round earth's imagined corners blow
> Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
> From death, you numberless infinities
> Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go;
> All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
> All whom war, death, age, agues, tyrannies,
> Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes
> Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
> But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space
> For, if above all these my sins abound,
> 'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
> When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,
> Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
> As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood.

In 1610 Sir Robert Drury became Donne's patron, and the poet published in 1611–12 two extravagantly transcendental elegies, *An Anatomy of the World*, in celebration of the knight's daughter, who had just died in her fourteenth year. In 1612 he went with Drury to Paris, but returned without any definite employment. "No man," he writes in 1614, "attends Court fortunes more impatiently than I do." But before that year was out the King had insisted on his taking holy orders, and in January 1615, Donne was ordained. He was, however, long disappointed of any promotion, and when his wife died, on August 15, 1617, her allowance ceased and Donne was left "a man of narrow, unsettled estate and the careful [anxious] father of seven children then living." After the death of Mrs. Donne, the poet "became crucified to the world," and adopted an ascetic mode of life which he preserved to the end. But he acceded to the invitation of the benchers

of Lincoln's Inn to become their Reader, and in 1619 he accompanied Lord Doncaster on his Embassy to Germany. In 1621 Donne was appointed Dean of St. Paul's, and he died on March 31, 1631, being buried in his cathedral, where a very curious portrait-statue of him, wrapped in a winding-sheet, still exists. He was the most powerful and splendid preacher of his time, "carrying some to heaven in holy raptures and enticing others to amend their life"; Izaak Walton compared him in the pulpit to an angel leaning from a cloud. The main part of Donne's writings were posthumously published—his *Poems* in 1633; his *Sermons* (with, in the first volume, a *Life* by Walton) in 1640, 1649, and 1661; his *Biathanatos* in 1634; his *Letters* in 1651. On one of the many occasions of his sudden departure on foreign travel, Donne addressed the following epistle to his wife:

Sweetest love, I do not go
 For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me,
 But since that I
At the last must part, 'tis best,
Thus to use myself in jest
 By feignèd deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
 And yet is here to-day;
He hath no desire nor sense,
 Nor half so short a way;
 Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
 More wings and spurs than he.

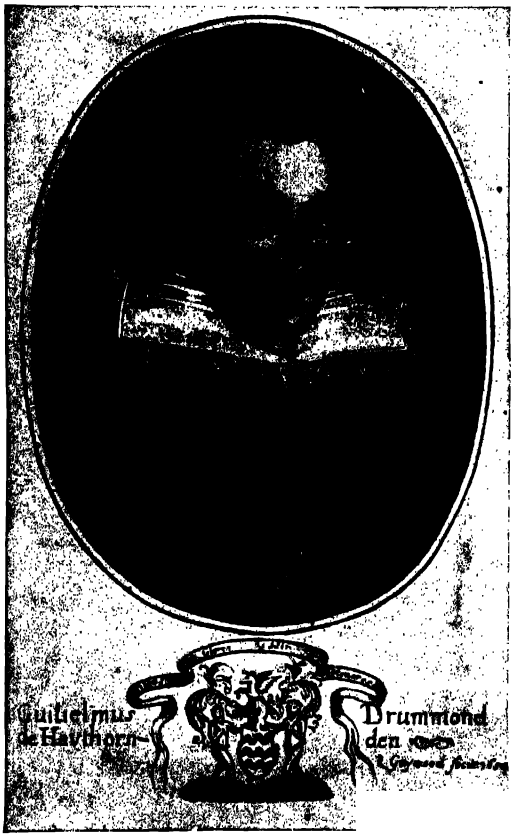
O how feeble is man's power,
 That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
 Nor a lost hour recall;
 But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
 Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
 But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
 My life's blood doth decay.
 It cannot be
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
 Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part,
 And may thy fears fulfil.
 But think that we
Are but turn'd aside to sleep;
They who one another keep
 Alive, ne'er parted be.

A couple of stanzas from *The Canonization* may exemplify the fiery violence of his early muse:

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love!
Or chide my palsy, or my gout;
My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout;
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his Honour or his Grace,
Or the king's real, or his stamp'd face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.



William Drummond of Hawthornden
From an engraving by R. Gaywood

Alas! alas! who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?
Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguey bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Tho' she and I do love.

While literature, and particularly poetry, flourished with such magnificence in the English dominions of King James, the removal of the seat of government to London seems to have starved intellectual effort north of the Tweed. To the Scottish ballads, which form an independent group of compositions of high national importance, attention has already been given. The literary graces now generally cultivated in Scotland were those which were in fashion in England and France; we look in vain for what can be considered an independent Scots movement at this juncture. Du Bartas, in the translations of Joshua Sylvester, was greatly admired in Edinburgh, and the influence on current Scottish verse came from him and in a less measure from Spenser. Sir Robert Ayton, who wrote English with studied elegance, abandoned the vernacular altogether; the surviving poems of the Earl of Ancrum fail to justify the reputation he enjoyed as a sonneteer; and the Earl of Stirling, though preferred by his Scottish contemporaries to Tasso, is a

pedantic and lumbering writer. The best of all the Scotch poets of this age, by far, is WILLIAM DRUMMOND of Hawthornden, who had studied Sidney and Ronsard, but had, peculiar to himself, a rich note of solemn music, which he exercised in sonnets, madrigals and canzones of genuine value. He had the honour of attracting the notice of Milton, who borrowed with slight adaptation Drummond's

> Immortal Amaranthus, princely Rose,
> Sad Violet, and that sweet flower that bears
> In sanguine spots the tenour of our woes.

There is beauty, but no great elevation in the poetry of Drummond; it is sensuous, uniform, and dyed with gorgeous colours. Its fault is a certain studied artificiality, and a tendency to give way, prematurely, to that mania for violent and tasteless imagery which was already invading the Italian and Spanish writers whom Drummond was among the earliest in these islands to study.



Hawthornden

From Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland," 1789

William Drummond (1585–1649) belonged to one of the best families of Scotland, and claimed kinship, through Annabella, the Queen of Robert III., with the royal family. His father, Sir John Drummond, became gentleman-usher to James VI.; the poet was the eldest son, and was born at his father's romantic house of Hawthornden on December 13, 1585. After taking his degree in the University of Edinburgh, Drummond proceeded in 1607 to Bourges, and thence to Paris, being absent on the Continent until he succeeded to the estates of Hawthornden in 1610. He published a fine elegy on the death of Prince Henry in 1613, and a volume of *Poems* in 1616. His *Forth Feasting*, a panegyric on the King, belongs to 1617. In the winter of 1618, Ben Jonson paid Drummond a long visit in Edinburgh and at Hawthornden, and the Scotch poet took invaluable notes of Jonson's conversation. Drummond's *Flowers of Sion* appeared in 1623, and to these religious poems was appended the admirable prose treatise called *The Cypress Grove*. He had suffered in his youth the misfortune of seeing his intended bride carried off by a fever just before their wedding-day, and he remained long inconsolable; but in 1632 he married a peasant-girl, the daughter of a village minister, who bore him nine children. Drummond was deeply attached to the royal house, and his death, which happened on December 4, 1649, is said to have been hastened by his excessive grief at the "martyrdom" of Charles I. The rich lyric strain of Drummond is exemplified in the canzone which opens thus:

Phœbus, arise,
And paint the sable skies
With azure, white, and red;
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed,
That she thy carrier may with roses spread;
The nightingales thy coming eachwhere sing;
Make an eternal spring!
Give life to this dark world which lieth dead!
Spread forth thy golden hair
In larger locks than thou wast wont before,
And, emperor-like, decore
With diadem of pearl thy temples fair.



William Drummond of Hawthornden
After the portrait by C. Janssen

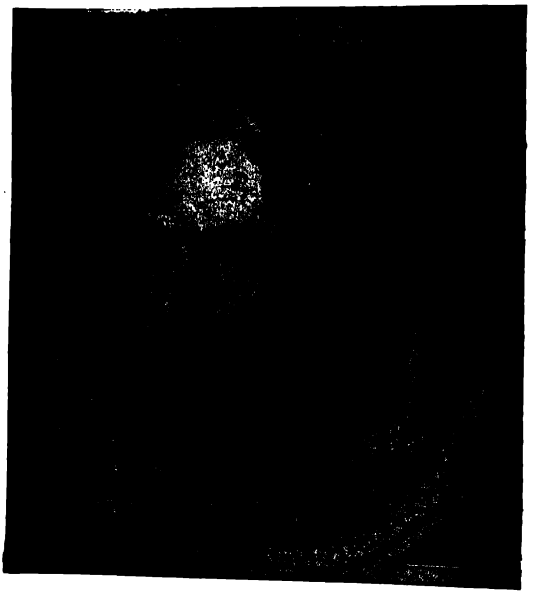
The best of Drummond's sonnets are among the most dignified productions of the Jacobean age. Those *To My Lute* and *To a Nightingale* are in all the anthologies. This is less familiar:

As, in a dusky and tempestuous night,
A star is wont to spread her locks of gold,
And while her pleasant rays abroad are roll'd,
Some spiteful cloud doth rob us of her sight;
Fair soul, in this black age so shin'd thou bright,
And made all eyes with wonder thee behold,
Till ugly Death, depriving us of light,
In his grim misty arms thee did enfold.
Who more shall vaunt true beauty here to see?
What hope doth more in any heart remain,
That such perfections shall his reason reign,
If Beauty, with thee born, too died with thee?
World, plain no more of Love, nor count his harms;
With his pale trophies Death hath hung his arms.

At the close of the Elizabethan age the range of poetic interest began to be widened, and at the same time dangerous exotic influences were introduced by the circulation of very able translations, particularly from the French and the Italian. Several of these became almost classical, and were very frequently reprinted. Ariosto, in his *Orlando Furioso*, was presented to English readers by Sir John Harington; Tasso, in his *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recovery of Jerusalem*, by Richard Carew and afterwards by Edward Fairfax; the popular *Divine Weeks and Works* of Du Bartas by Joshua Sylvester; above all Homer, in his entire works, was magnificently rendered by George Chapman. Each of these versions was a valuable gift to our literature and, in particular, the translation of Tasso by Fairfax, in which that gentleman proved himself to belong

to the Spenserian school of the Fletchers and Browne, was a fructifying and highly characteristic product of the period.

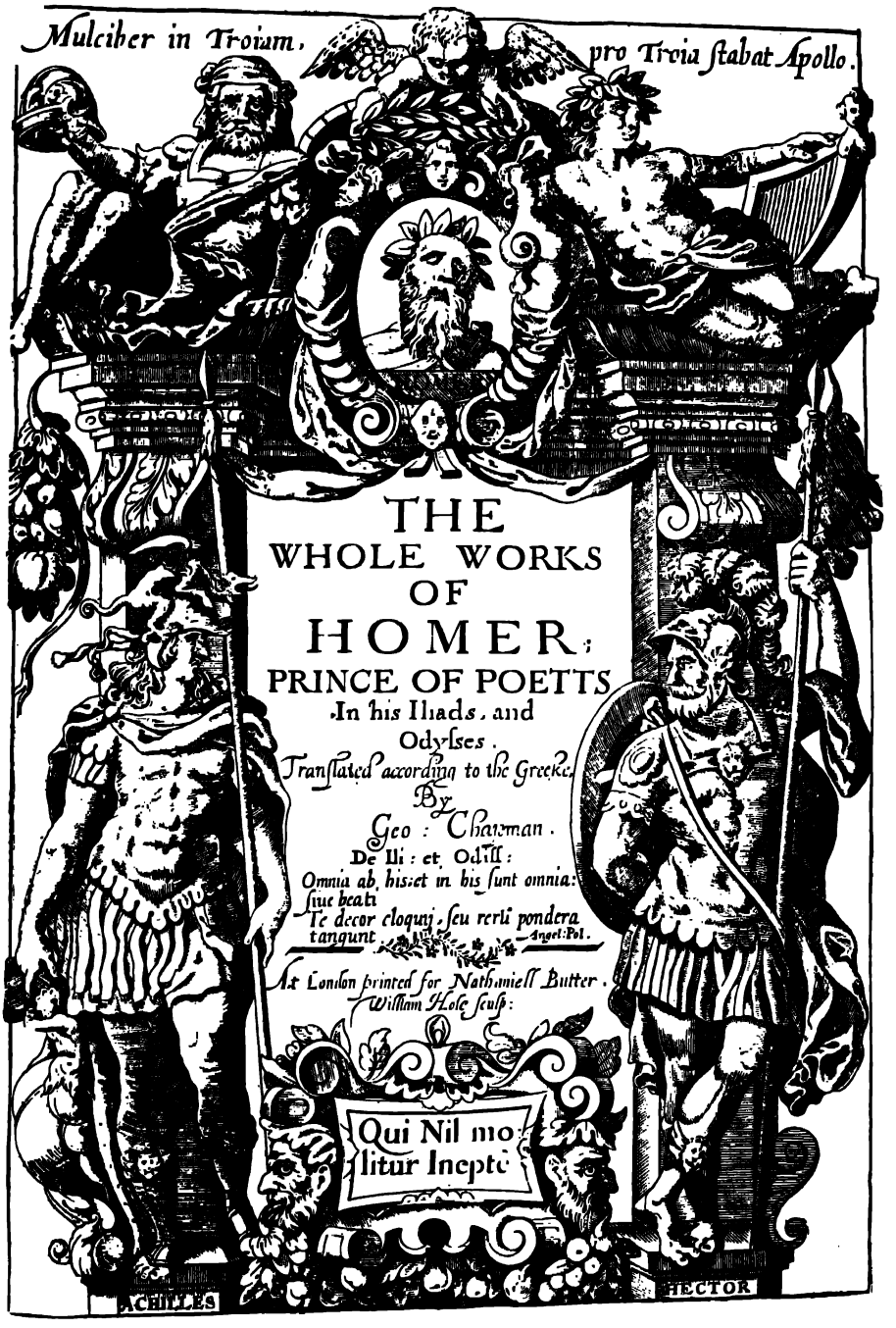
Chapman's translation, with what Charles Lamb called its "unconquerable quaintness," its deep sympathy with one or two aspects of the genius of Homer, and its splendid freedom and vigour of paraphrase, is a work which stands alone in the Jacobean age. Chapman employed, for the *Iliad*, an interesting rhymed couplet of fourteen feet, which is very effective when written with spirit. This is, indeed, so commonly spoken of as the general metre of Chapman's *Homer*, as to leave an impression upon us that those who praise this translation rarely proceed far in the reading of it. For Chapman soon became weary of his galloping couplet, and in the *Odyssey* and the *Hymns*, as well as in his version of Hesiod's *Days and Weeks*, he returned to the normal heroic measure. A fragment from the Eleventh Book of the *Iliad* may give an impression of his earlier treatment of the narrative:



Engraved portrait of Chapman
From the 1616 edition of "Homer"

High was the fury of his lance. But, having beat them close
Beneath their walls, the both-worlds' Sire did not again repose
On fountain-flowing Ida's tops, being newly slid from Heaven,
And held a lightning in his hand; from thence the charge was given
To Iris with the golden wings: "Thaumantia, fly," said he,
"And tell Troy's Hector that as long as he enrag'd shall see
The soldier-loving Atreus' son amongst the foremost fight,
Depopulating troops of men, so long must he excite
Some other to resist the foe, and he no arms advance;
But when he wounded takes his horse, attain'd with shaft or lance,
Then will I fill his arm with death, ev'n till he reach the fleet,
And peaceful night treads busy day beneath her sacred feet."
The wind-foot swift Thaumantia obey'd, and us'd her wings
To famous Ilion, from the mount enchas'd with silver springs,
And found in his bright chariot the hardy Trojan knight,
To whom she spake the words of Jove, and vanish'd from his sight.
He leapt upon the sounding earth, and shook his lengthful dart,
And everywhere he breath'd exhorts, and stirr'd up every heart.
A dreadful fight he set on foot. His soldiers straight turn'd head.
The Greeks stood firm. In both the hosts, the field was perfected.
But Agamemnon, foremost still, did all his side exceed,
And would not be the first in name unless the first in deed.

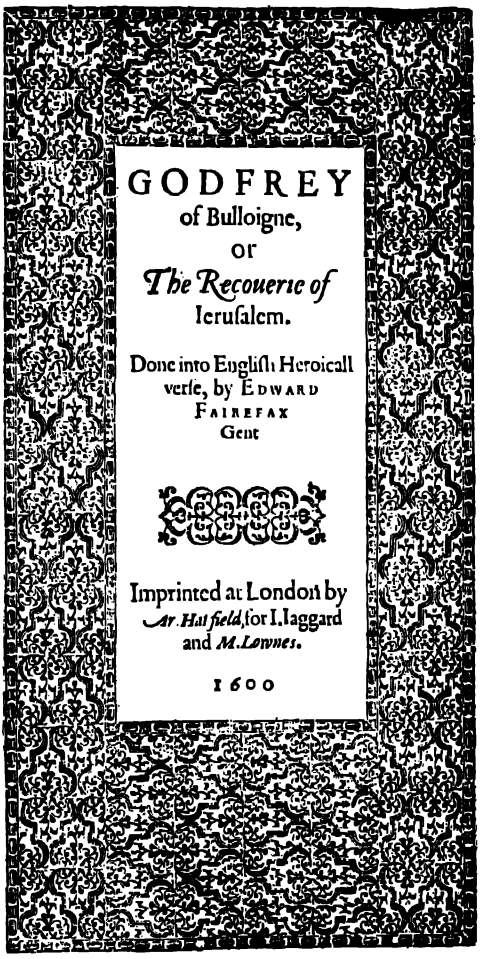
From this we may turn to Chapman's treatment of the *Odyssey*, where



Title-page of Chapman's "Homer," 1616

it is interesting to find him using the measure which Pope was to employ for the same purpose a hundred years later. Here is a fragment from the Fourth Book:

While this his thoughts disputed, forth did shine,
Like to the golden distaff-deck'd Divine,
From her bed's high and odoriferous room
Helen. To whom, of an elaborate loom,
Adrasta set a chair; Alcippe brought
A piece of tapestry of fine wool wrought;
Phylo a silver cabinet conferr'd,
Given by Alcandra nuptially endear'd
To Lord Polybius, whose abode in Thebes
The Egyptian city was, where wealth in heaps
His famous house held, out of which did go,
In gift to Atrides, silver bath-tubs two,
Two tripods, and of fine gold talents ten.
His wife did likewise send to Helen then
Fair gifts, a distaff that of gold was wrought,
And that rich cabinet that Phylo brought,
Round, and with gold ribb'd, now of fine thread full;
On which extended, crown'd with finest wool
Of violet gloss, the golden distaff lay.

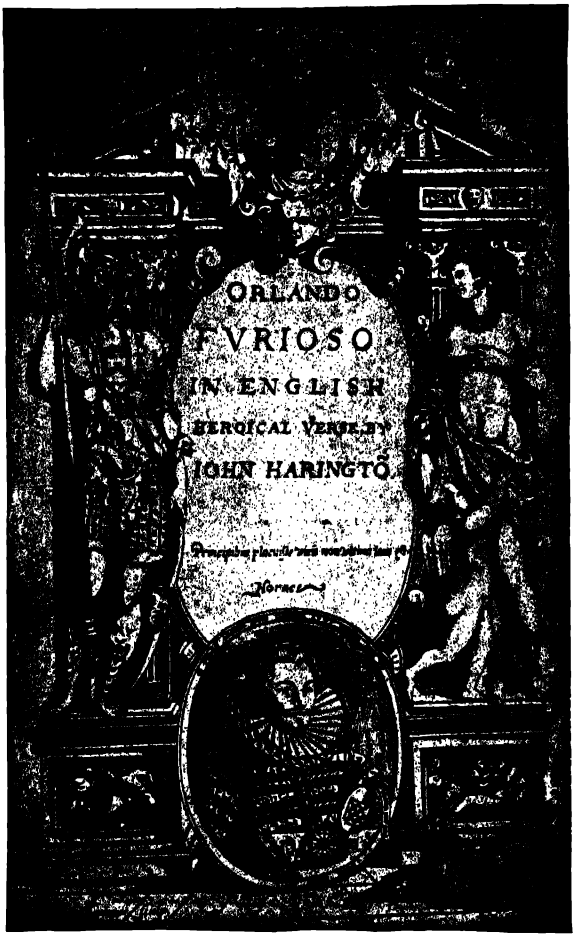

GODFREY
of Bulloigne,
or
The Recouerie of
Ieruſalem.
Done into Engliſh Heroicall
verſe, by EDWARD
FAIRFAX
Gent
Imprinted at London by
Ar. Hatfield, for I. Iaggard
and M. Lownes.
1600

Title-page of "Godfrey of Bulloigne," 1600

Chapman's enthusiasm for his subject was extreme; he asserted with a loud voice that "of all books extant in all kinds, Homer is the first and best." In early youth the magnificence of the Greek had impressed itself upon his imagination, and in his old age he was still rapturously contemplating "this full sphere of poesy's sweetest prime." He translated what others, and in particular Politian, had written in the praise of Homer, and his original epistles recur to the beloved theme. At the suggestion of Bacon, and supported by the praise of Ben Jonson and Drayton, Chapman turned from Homer to the translation of Hesiod's *Book of Days*, but here his "Attic elocution" flags and fails him. His whole heart was with Homer, and Homer alone.

The publication of the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Torquato Tasso, and the sensational success which it had enjoyed throughout the Catholic world, had greatly excited interest in England, where Italian books seem to have had numerous readers. The earliest version, that of Richard Carew, was published here before the brief life of Tasso closed in darkness at San Onofrio;

the second, that of EDWARD FAIRFAX, appeared only five years after that event, so that it was really an Italian contemporary to whom these English honours were paid. The version of Carew, of which only five cantos saw the light, was kept pedantically close to the original. The publisher, boasting of "how strict a course the translator hath tied himself in," printed the Italian text opposite each page further to emphasise the literalness. This determination to be accurate makes Carew very stiff, and sometimes almost unintelligible; his translation is, at its worst, hardly more than a "crib" to Tasso. This is an example of it at its best:



Title-page of "Orlando Furioso," with portrait of Haryngton, by W. Rogers

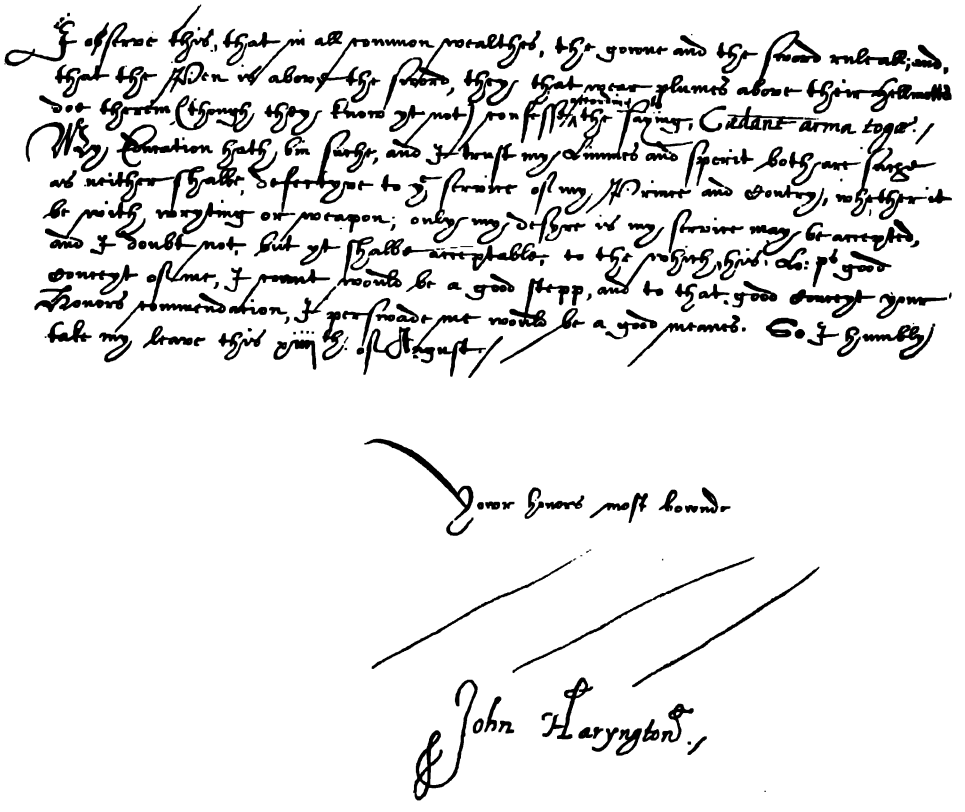
Within few days this Dame her journey ends,
There where the Franks their large pavilions spread,
Whose beauty rare at his appearance lends
Babbling to tongues, and eyes a-gazing led:
As when some star or comet strange ascends,
And in clear day through sky his beams doth shed;
They flock in plumps this pilgrim fair to view,
And to be wised what cause her thither drew.

Not Argos, Cyprus, Delos e'er present
Patterns of shape or beauty could so dear;
Gold are her locks, which, in white shadow pent,
Eft do but glimpse, eft all disclos'd appear,
As when new cleans'd we see the element,—
Sometimes the sun shines through white cloud unclear,
Sometimes from cloud out-gone, his rays more bright
He sheds abroad, doubling of day the light.

To turn from Carew to Fairfax is to pass from a crabbed experiment to one of the most admirable transfusions of poetry from one language to another which has ever been achieved. Tasso's rich epic, with its embroidered episodes and its pictures of radiant chivalry, is genuinely transferred by Fairfax to the atmosphere of England. That he was so harmonious and "prevailing" a poet in translation is the more remarkable in that such specimens of his original

verse as have been preserved are without value. Fairfax existed only when he was guided by the magical genius of Tasso. A fragment of his description of Rinaldo at the Mount of Olives may here be given :

Thus pravèd he. With purple wings up-flew,
In golden weed, the morning's lusty Queen,
Begilding with the radiant beams she threw
His helm, his harness, and the mountain green ;



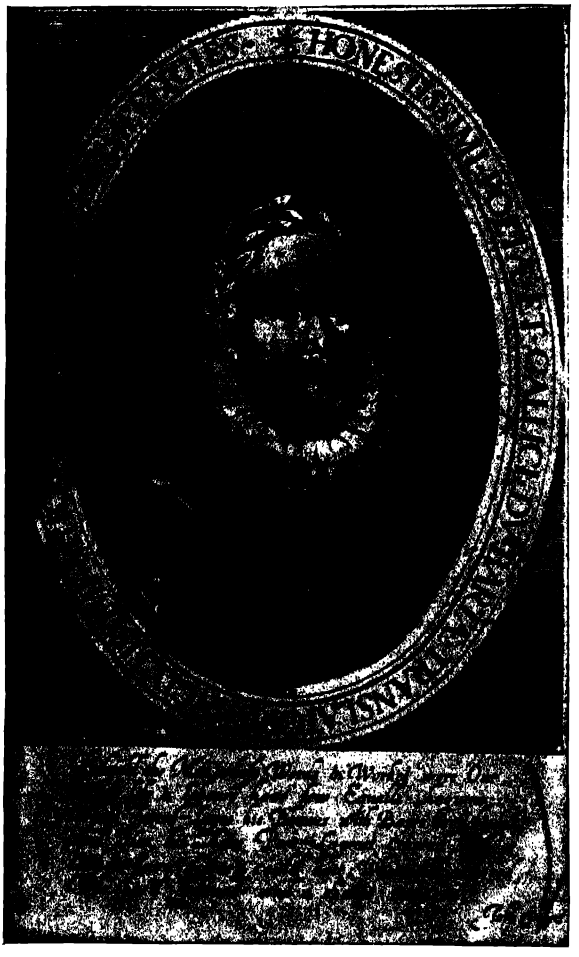
Facsimile Letter from Haryngton to Lady Russell

British Mu eum, Lansdowne MS. 82

Upon his breast and forehead gently blew
The air, that balm and nardus breath'd unseen
And o'er his head, let down from clearest skies,
A cloud of pure and precious dew there flies.

The heavenly dew was on his garments spread,
To which compared, his clothes pale ashes seem,
And sprinkled so that all that paleness fled,
And thence of purest white bright rays outstream :
So cheerèd are the flowers, late witherèd,
With the sweet comfort of the morning beam,
And so, returned to youth, a serpent old
Adorns herself in new and native gold.

The lovely whiteness of his changèd weed
 The prince perceivèd well and long admired;
Toward the forest march'd he on with speed,
 Resolv'd, as such adventures great required;
Thither he came, whence, shrinking back for dread
 Of that strange desert's sight, he first retired;
But not to him fearful or loathsome made
That forest was, but sweet with pleasant shade.



From the engraved portrait in the 1633 edition of Du Bartas

Richard Carew (1555–1620) was born at East Anthony, in Cornwall, and was educated as a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, Oxford. He disputed in public with Philip Sidney when they both were children; a little later Carew is associated as an antiquary with the historians Camden, Spelman, and Raleigh. He represented various Cornish boroughs in parliament, and in 1602 he published a valuable *Survey of Cornwall*. His first instalment of Tasso, called *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, was published at Exeter in 1594. Of the career of **Edward Fairfax** very little is known. He was probably the natural son of Sir Thomas Fairfax of Denton. Almost all his life was spent in delightful retirement in the forest of Knaresborough. His *Godfrey of Bulloigne* was printed first in 1600. It is believed that Edward Fairfax died in 1635. **Sir John Harington** (or **Haryngton**) (1561–1612) was a godson of Queen Elizabeth, and he translated the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto in 1591, in obedience to her command. A very odd publication of Harington's in prose, the *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, which is partly a useful hygienic treatise and partly a savage Rabelaisian satire, deeply offended the Queen, and Harington was driven from Court. He cast in his lot with Essex, and shared his adventures and his disgrace. The *Epigrams* of Harington were much admired, and were collected, in 1613, after his death. He was no

Beeing mforced (through the grievous visitacion of
Gods heavie hand, upon your Highnes poore Citty of Lon=
don) thus long (& yet longer like) to defer the Impres:
sion of my Slender Labours (long-since meant unto your
Ma^tie^) I thought it more then tyme, by some other
meanes, to tender my humble Homage to your Highnes.
But wanting both leasure, in my self, (& here in the Country)
such helps, as I could have wished, To copie the Entire
Worke (coorthie your Ma^tes^ readng) I was fayne thus -
soudainlie to scribble over this small Parte That (in -
the mean time) by a Part, I might (as it wear) giue
your Highnes Possession of the Whole; vntill it shall
please the Almightie, in his end-les Mercie to giue an
end to this lamentable Affliction, w^ch^ for his dear Sonns
sake I most earnestlie beseech him · & ever to protect your
Sacred Ma^tie^ & all your Royal ffamilie vnder the wings
of his gracious ffavour

Your Maiesties

- most humble Subiect,

& devoted Servant,

Josuah Sylvester

Letter from Sylvester to James I.

poet, but a man of great shrewdness of observation, prompt and cool in action, and of a ready wit. An immense popularity attended the versions of **Joshua Sylvester** (1563–1618), who attached himself to the French poet Du Bartas, as Chapman did to Homer. Sylvester was the son of a Kentish clothier, and he was educated under Hadrianus Saravia at Southampton, and then at Leyden. He became a merchant-adventurer, and spent much time in the Low Countries. As early as 1591 he began to publish instalments of his immense version of *The Divine Weeks and Works* of Du Bartas, on which he was engaged all the rest o his life. In 1613 Sylvester became secretary to the great Merchants' Company at Middelburg, in Zealand, and there he died on September 28, 1618. His version of the French poet's Puritan epic long retained its popularity, and it is well known that Milton was intimately acquainted with it. *The Divine Weeks and Works*, whether in Du Bartas' French or in Sylvester's English, has now become intolerably tedious and unattractive; but the translator, had he concentrated his powers on a happier object, might have enriched the language. This is an example of his work at its best:



Title-page of Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' "Divine Weekes and Workes," 1605

Sweet Night, without thee, without thee alas!
Our life were loathsome, even a hell to pass;
For outward pains and inward passion still,
With thousand deaths, would soul and body thrill.
O Night, thou pullest the proud mask away
Wherewith vain actors in this world's great play
By day disguise them. For, no difference
Night makes between the peasant and the prince,
The poor and rich, the prisoner and the judge,
The foul and fair, the master and the drudge,
The fool and wise, Barbarian and the Greek,
For Night's black mantle covers all alike.

CHAPTER VIII

JACOBEAN DRAMA

THERE can be no question that in the first quarter of the seventeenth century the imaginative force of the English people ran so vehemently in a single channel, that all other manifestations of it are in danger of being regarded as side-streams or backwaters. As the man of fancy in the reign of Elizabeth had naturally turned to an amorous or pastoral lyric as the medium in which to express the passion which worked in him, so his successor in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. naturally produced a tragedy or a farcical tragi-comedy. The drama was the characteristic art of the age in England, and even if we omit Shakespeare from our consideration, as a figure too disturbing and overshadowing, the fact remains true that it was in the drama that Jacobean England displayed its main current of imagination.

By the end of the sixteenth century the question of the direction which English drama was to take was absolutely settled. The classical play, which had enjoyed so overwhelming a success in Italy and France, had been glanced at by our poets, gingerly touched and rejected as inappropriate and unsympathetic. Just as in France the inspiration of the dramatists had been from the first directly academic, so with us it was directly popular. The earliest modern plays in France, such as those of Jodelle and La Péruse, had been classroom entertainments, given in French in place of Latin, by actors who imitated the verses of Seneca in the vernacular instead of repeating them in the original. This was how French tragedy was formed, and on these lines it rose, smoothly and steadily, to Corneille and Racine. But we have seen that English tragedy was, from the first, a wild and popular entertainment, allied to the mediæval morality and to the mediæval farce rather than to anything that Aristotle could have legislated for or Scaliger have approved. The experiments of Fulke Greville, and still more of Samuel Daniel (who, like Jodelle, but half a century later than he, wrote a Senecan *Cleopatra* in choruses) may give us an idea of what our drama might have become if we had taken the same turn as the French.

By 1600, however, the question was finally settled. The taste for declamation, for long moral disquisitions in rhymed soliloquy, had been faintly started by a few University pedants and had been rejected by the public in favour of a loud, loose tragedy and a violently contrasted and farcical comedy. In England something of the same national disposition to adopt for the stage extravagant and complicated plots, which had been met with a few years

before in Spain, had determined the action of our theatrical poets. The tragedies of Argensola, the predecessor of Lope de Vega, are described by Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly as "a tissue of butcheries," and this poet was an exact contemporary of our carnage-loving Chapmans and Tourneurs. We see in Spain, although the Spanish drama has little positive resemblance to the Elizabethan, parallel lines of character which are not like anything which we meet with in the dramatic Renaissance of Italy or France. But whatever adaptations of the style of stage-plays might have seemed imminent about 1595, they were all swept away at the approach of the genius of Shakespeare. When a writer of superlative force takes the development of a branch of national literature under his sway, he bends it, in its superficial forms, to his will. Jacobean drama cannot be judged apart from the fact that the most illustrious poet of the world chose to make it his instrument.

But if Shakespeare determined, beyond any power of Latinising contemporaries to divert it, the line which the vast mass of Jacobean drama should take, his own relation to his fellow playwrights is confused by the fact that he towers immeasurably above them. He would illustrate his age much better, and form a much more useful guide to its intricacies, if he were not raised over it by such a mountainous elevation. One of the penalties of altitude is isolation, and in reviewing the state of literary feeling in England in the Jacobean times, we gain the impression that a child nowadays may be more familiar with the proportion between Shakespeare and his fellows than the brightest of these latter could be; since those highest qualities of his, which we now take for granted, remained invisible to his contemporaries. To them, unquestionably, he was a stepping-stone to the superior art of Jonson, to the more fluid and obvious graces of Beaumont and Fletcher. Of those whose inestimable privilege it was to meet Shakespeare day by day, we have no evidence that even Ben Jonson perceived the absolute supremacy of his genius. The case is rather curious, for it was not that anything austere or arrogant in himself or his work repelled recognition, or that those who gazed were blinded by excess of light. On the contrary, it seemed to his own friends that they appreciated his amiable, easy talent at its proper value; he was "gentle" Shakespeare to them; and they loved the man and they were ready to borrow freely from his poetry. But that he excelled them all in every poetical artifice, soaring above them all like an elm in a coppice of hazels, this, had it been whispered at the Mermaid, would have aroused smiles of derision. The elements of Shakespeare's perfection were too completely fused to attract vulgar wonder at any one point, and those intricate refinements of style and of character which now excite in us an almost superstitious amazement did not appeal to the rough and hasty Jacobean hearer. In considering Shakespeare's position during his lifetime, moreover, it must not be forgotten that his works made no definite appeal to the reading class until after his death. The study of "Shakespeare" as a book cannot date farther back than 1623.

To us, however, our closer acquaintance with Shakespeare must prove a disastrous preparation for appreciating his contemporaries. He rises out of all



William Congreve.

AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY, WINDSOR CASTLE.



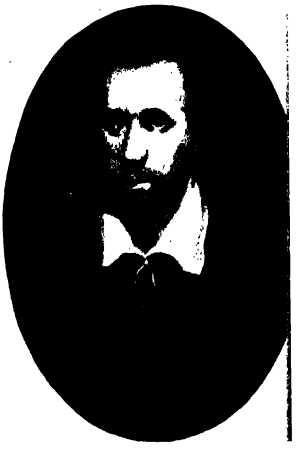
John Fletcher.

ER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL
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John Donne.

AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL
LIBRARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE.



Ben Jonson.

AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROY
LIBRARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

measurement with them by comparison, and we are tempted to repeat that unjust trope of Landor's in which he calls the other Jacobean dramatists mushrooms growing round the foot of the Oak of Arden. They had, indeed, noble flashes of the creative light, but Shakespeare walks in the soft and steady glow of it. As he proceeds, without an effort, life results; his central qualities are ceaseless growth. In him, too, characteristics are found fully formed which the rest of the world had at that time barely conceived. His liberality, his tender respect for women, his absence from prejudice, his sympathy for every peculiarity of human emotion—these are miraculous, but the vigour of his imagination explains the marvel. He sympathised because he comprehended, and he comprehended because of the boundless range of his capacity. The quality in which Shakespeare is unique among the poets of the world, and that which alone explains the breadth, the unparalleled vivacity and coherency of the vast world of his imagination, is what Coleridge calls his "omnipresent creativeness," his power of observing everything, of forgetting nothing, and of combining and reissuing impressions in complex and infinite variety. In this godlike gift not the most brilliant of his great contemporaries approached him.

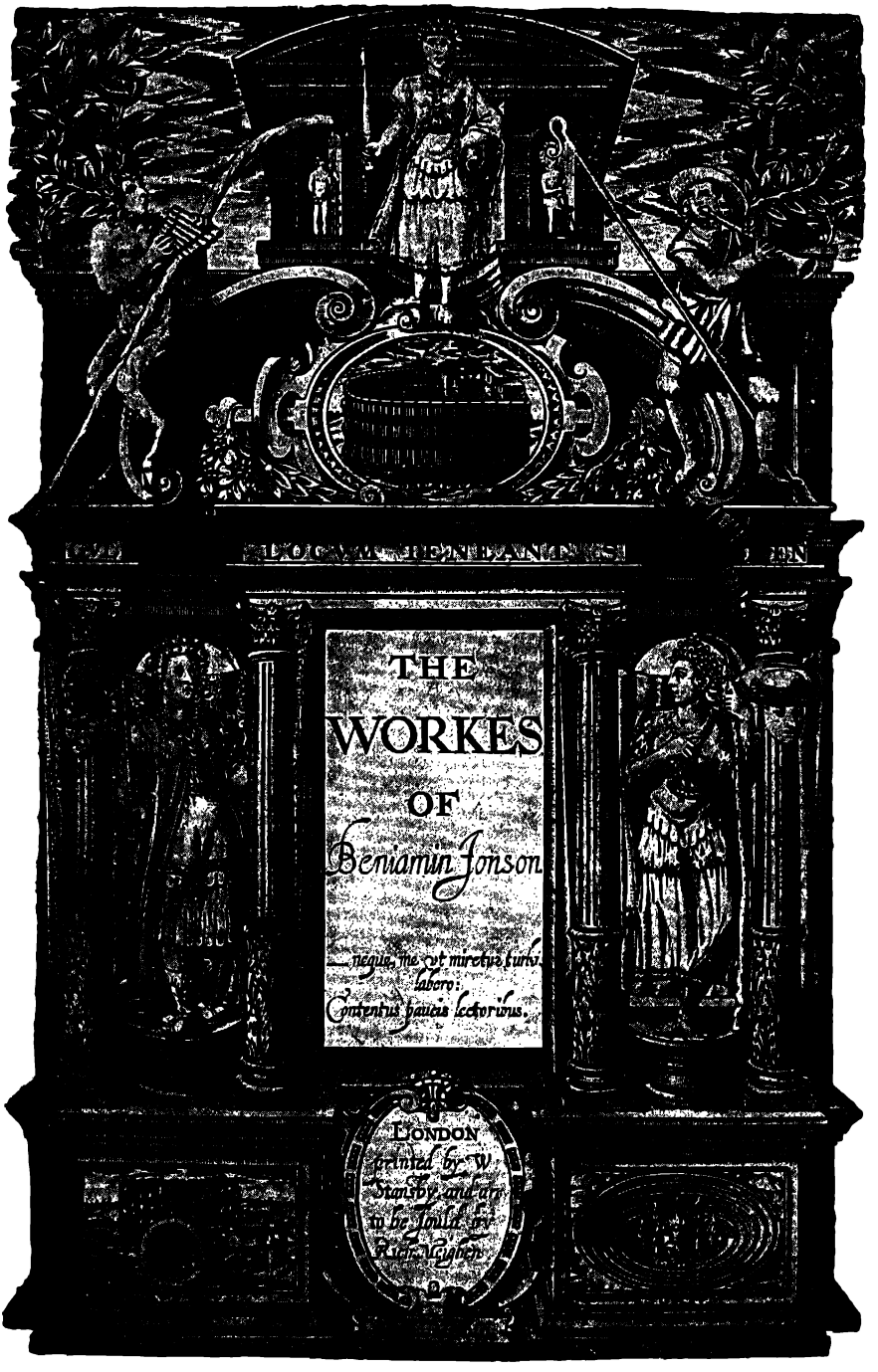
The misfortune of the Jacobean dramatists who were not Shakespeare lay in their contentedness with the results of their very remarkable personal energy. Their love of extravagance betrayed them into shapelessness, their rebellious scorn of discipline into anarchy. But perhaps their most serious fault was one inherent in the system of dramatic composition which they had adopted. They fell away from the examination of sane and normal types of humanity, in which they suspected the presence of the hated academic spirit, and they devoted all their attention to the "humours" of violent exceptions and odd varieties of humanity. As the fire of passion sank, they endeavoured to stir its embers by a more and more bombastic and grotesque insistence on these "humours," losing at last, in their preposterous pursuit of farce, all touch with the delicate spirit of truth. In their confusion of plot, in their far-fetched imagery, in their jumble of circumstance and event, in their fantastic and unearthly caprices, in their violently contrasted outbreaks of vituperance and amorousness, we feel the minor Jacobean dramatists to present to us, with all the air of those who offer divine gifts, a medley of what is good and bad, of what is wholesome and stimulating, with what is decaying and distasteful.

The general criticism of the nineteenth century was indulgent to the faults and enthusiastic about the merits of the Jacobean dramatists. It was observed by Charles Lamb, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt that for a hundred and fifty years the beauties of the contemporaries of Shakespeare had been unduly slighted; these critics set themselves to show in what manner those great men felt, "what sort of loves and enmities theirs were, how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated." No form of literature is more effectively presented by quotation than the drama of these Jacobean poets, and Charles Lamb, in 1808, dazzled all sensitive readers by the richness of the anthology he gathered from the English dramatists who lived about the

time of Shakespeare. Since the age of Lamb, the tone of criticism has been increasingly eulogistic, until in the lips of Mr. Swinburne it reached, in prose and verse, the proportions of a pæan. It can hardly be questioned that the critics of whom Mr. Swinburne is at once the most learned and the most inspired, who approach the minor writers of the age of James I. with such epithets as "unflawed" (Marston), "sweetest of all thy time save one" (Dekker), "a full-blown flower in heaven" (John Day), and who occupy themselves exclusively with the fugitive beauties and felicitous occasional audacities of their favourites, are unsafe guides for those who, in humdrum fashion, read the works of the authors so lauded, not in picturesque quotation, but steadily through as dramas representative of human life on a possible public stage. From Charles Lamb downwards, our fanatics of the Jacobean drama have brought with them half the qualities they have attributed; they have seen too much on the one hand, and too little on the other. These powerful and romantic poets are no longer in need of being urged upon ignorant or unwilling admirers. They are rather in danger of suffering from excess of praise and from a neglect of those errors of proportion and discretion which prevent them from claiming a place in the very highest rank of literary accomplishment. In a brief survey of non-Shakespearean drama from 1600 onwards, we ought not to blind ourselves to the fact that the highest point had already been reached, and that a decline was imminent.

With the turn of the century a reaction against pure imagination began to make itself felt in England, and this movement found a perfect expositor in BEN JONSON. Born seven years later than Shakespeare, he worked, like his fellows, in Henslowe's manufactory of romantic drama, until, in consequence of running a rapier through a man, the fierce poetic bricklayer was forced to take up for a while the position of an Ishmael. The immediate result was the production of a comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, in which a new thing was started in drama, the study of what Jonson called "recent humours or manners of men that went along with the times." In other words, in the midst of that luxurious romanticism which had culminated in Shakespeare, Ben Jonson set out to be what we now call a "realist" or a "naturalist." In doing this, he went back as rigidly as he could to the methods of Plautus, and fixed his "grave and consecrated eyes" on an academic scheme by which poetry was no longer to be a mere entertainment but a form of lofty mental gymnastic. Jonson called his solid and truculent pictures of the age "comic satires," and his intellectual arrogance combining with his contempt for those who differed from him, soon called down upon his proud and rugged head all the hostility of Parnassus. About the year 1600 Jonson's pugnaciousness had roused against him an opposition in which, perhaps, Shakespeare alone forbore to take a part. But Jonson was a formidable antagonist, and when he fought with a brother poet, he had a trick, in a double sense, of taking his pistol from him and beating him too.

A persistent rumour, constantly refuted, will have it that Shakespeare was one of those whom Jonson hated. The most outspoken of misanthropes did



Title-page of the Collected Works of Ben Jonson, 1616

not, we may be sure, call another man "star of poets" and "soul of the age" without meaning what he said; but there may have been a sense in which,

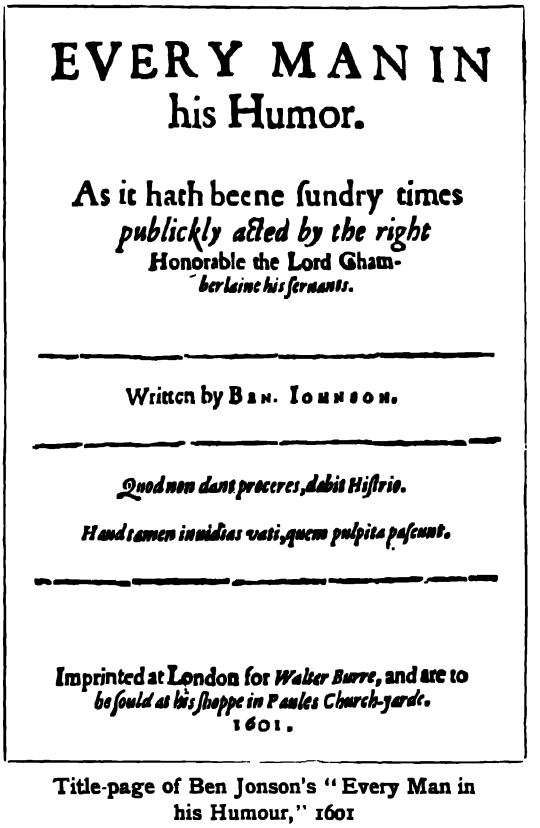
while loving Shakespeare and admiring his work, Jonson disapproved of its tendency. It could hardly be otherwise. He delighted in an iron style, hammered and twisted; he must have thought that Shakespeare's "excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions" had a flow too liquid and facile. Jonson, with his Latin paraphrases, his stiff academic procession of ideas, could but dislike the flights and frenzies of his far less learned but brisker and airier companion. And Jonson, be it remembered, had the age on his side. To see *Julius Cæsar* on the boards might be more amusing, but surely no seriously minded Jacobean could admit that it was so instructive as a performance of *Sejanus* or of *Catiline*, which gave a chapter of good sound Roman history, without lyric flowers or ornaments of style, in hard blank verse. Even the ponderous comedies of Ben Jonson were put forth by him, and were accepted by his contemporaries, as very serious contributions to the highest culture. What other men called "plays" were "works" to Jonson, as the old joke had it.

Solid and of lasting value as are the productions of Jonson, the decline begins to be observed in them. Even if we confine our attention to his two noblest plays—the *Fox* and the *Alchemist*—we cannot but admit that here, in the very heyday and glory of the English Renaissance, a fatal element is introduced. Charm, ecstasy, the free play of the emotions, the development of individual character—these are no longer the sole solicitude of the poet, who begins to dogmatise and educate, to prefer types to persons and logic to passion. It is no wonder that Ben Jonson was so great a favourite with the writers of the Restoration, for he was their natural parent. With all their rules and unities, with all their stickling for pseud-Aristotelian correctness, they were the intellectual descendants of that poet who, as Dryden said, "was willing to give place to the classics in all things." For the next fifty years English poetry was divided between loyalty to Spenser and attraction to Ben Jonson, and every year the influence of the former dwindled while that of the latter increased.

In temperament Jonson differed wholly from the other leaders of Jacobean drama. They, without exception, were romantic; he by native bias, purely classical. It is not difficult to perceive that the essential quality of his mind had far more in common with Corneille and with Dryden than with Shakespeare. He was so full of intelligence that he was able to adopt, and to cultivate with some degree of zest, the outward forms of romanticism, but his heart was always with the Latins, and his favourite works, though not indeed his best, were his stiff and solid Roman tragedies. He brought labour to the construction of his poetry, and he found himself surrounded by facile pens, to whom he seemed, or fancied that he seemed, "barren, dull, lean, a poor writer." He did not admire much of the florid ornament in which they delighted, and which we also have been taught to admire. He grew to hate the kind of drama which Marlowe had inaugurated. No doubt, sitting in the Apollo room of the Old Devil Tavern, with his faithful Cartwright, Brome and Randolph round him, he would truculently point to the inscription above the chimney,

Insipida pœmata nulla recitantor, and not spare the masters of the lovely age which he had outlived. He would speak "to the capacity of his hearers," as he tells us that the true artificer should do, and they would encourage him, doubtless, to tell of doctrines and precepts, of the dignity of the ancients, of Aristotle, "first accurate critic and truest judge" of poetry. They would listen, nor be aware that, for all his wisdom, and all the lofty distinction of his intellect, the palmy hour of English drama—that hour in which it had sung out like a child, ignorant of rules and precepts—had passed for ever.

Not the less does Ben Jonson hold a splendid and durable place in our annals. His is the most vivid and picturesque personal figure of the times; he is the most learned scholar, the most rigorous upholder of the dignity of letters, the most blustering soldier and insulting dueller in the literary arena; while his personal characteristics, "the mountain belly and the rocky face," the capacity for drawing young persons of talent around him and captivating them there, the volcanic alternations of fiery wit and smouldering, sullen arrogance, appeal irresistibly to the imagination, and make the "arch-poet" live in history. But his works, greatly admired, are little read. They fail to hold any but a trained attention; their sober majesty and massive concentration are highly praiseworthy, but not in a charming direction. His indifference to beauty tells against him. Jonson, even in his farces, is ponderous, and if we acknowledge "the flat sanity and smoke-dried sobriety" of his best passages, what words can we find for the tedium of his worst? He was an intellectual athlete of almost unequalled vigour, who chose to dedicate the essentially prosaic forces of his mind to the art of poetry, because the age he lived in was pre-eminently a poetic one. With such a brain and such a will as his he could not but succeed. If he had stuck to bricklaying, he must have rivalled Inigo Jones. But the most skilful and headstrong master-builder cannot quite become an architect of genius.


EVERY MAN IN
his Humor.

As it hath beene ſundry times
publickly acted by the right
Honorable the Lord Gham-
berlaine his ſeruants.

Written by Ben. Ionſon.

Quod nunc dant proceres, dabit Hiſtrio.

Haud tamen inuidias vati, quem pulpita paſcunt.

Imprinted at London for *Walter Burre*, and are to
be ſould at his ſhoppe in Paules Church-yarde.
1601.

Title-page of Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," 1601

Of the parentage of **Benjamin Jonson** (1573–1637) nothing is known but what

he told Drummond, of Hawthornden. "His grandfather came from Carlisle, and, he thought, from Annandale to it; he served King Henry VIII., and was a gentleman. His father lost all his estates under Queen Mary, having been cast in prison and forfeited; at last turned minister: so he was a minister's son. He himself was posthumous born, a month after his father's decease," in 1573. Two years later his mother, who lived in London, married a master-bricklayer, who sent the child to a private school at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and then to Westminster. Here the great William Camden "learned him" not only to read Latin and Greek but to write with freedom in prose and verse. Ben Jonson speaks of no one with greater respect than of

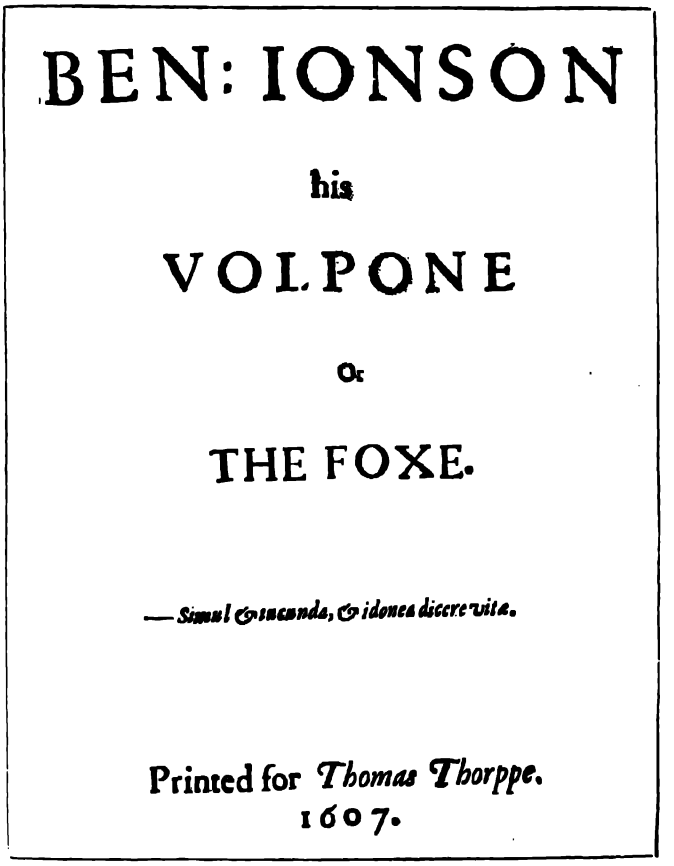
> Camden! most reverend head, to whom I owe
> All that I am in arts, all that I know.



Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford
After the portrait by Honthorst

If Fuller is correct, Jonson went for a short time to St John's College, Cambridge, but he was certainly soon apprenticed to the bricklayer's trade. From this he escaped to enlist as a soldier in the Low Countries, where he had a duel with an enemy "in the face of both the camps," killing him, and "taking *spolia opima* from him." He returned to England about 1592, and married; he was not very happy in his wife, whom he described as "a shrew, but honest," nor in his children. We do not know how he was occupied until about 1597, when he is found writing for the stage, and producing the earliest of his surviving works, the comedy of *Every Man in His Humour* (printed in 1601), unless, indeed, what is now called *The Case is Altered* be earlier still. In the autumn of 1598, one of the actors with whom Jonson was working in Henslowe's company was killed by him in a duel in the Fields at Shoreditch, and the poet was tried at the Old Bailey for murder. He confessed and was convicted, and came "almost to the gallows," but was released with the forfeit of all his goods and a felon's brand upon his thumb. While he was in prison for this affair, Jonson was converted to the Roman faith, in which he continued until 1610. According to an early legend, it was on his release that Shakespeare induced the Lord Chamberlain's men to buy *Every Man in His Humour*, which was certainly performed before the close of 1598; Shakespeare acted in it at the Globe. This was followed by what Ben Jonson called those "comical satires"—*Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), and *The Poetaster* (1601), in which he justifies that reputation for "self-love, arrogancy, impudence,

railing" which was already beginning to attend him. Among those whom he principally attacked were Dekker and Marston, who was satirised in the *Poetaster*. These poets replied in *Satiromastix*. Ben Jonson was now living under the patronage of Lord Aubigny; in 1603 he joined the King's Company, and wrote for them the first of his Roman tragedies, *Sejanus*, which was put upon the stage, with Shakespeare in the cast. The accession of James I. seems to have been highly favourable to Ben Jonson's prosperity. The earliest of his entertainments, *The Satyr*, was given at Althorpe, and he seems to have been immediately afterwards appointed Court Poet. Amid his innumerable masques, panegyrics, and Twelfth-Night pieces, he found time for work of a solid and durable kind. His magnificent *Volpone; or, the Fox*, was given at the Globe Theatre in 1605; this was a notable year in Ben Jonson's life, for it not only saw the earliest of his great Court-masques, *Blackness*, produced at Whitehall in conjunction with Inigo Jones's architecture, but, with Chapman and his old insulted enemy, Marston. At the close of 1604 Jonson had written the comedy of *Eastward Ho!* which contained "something against the Scots," for which the poets were thrown into prison. Ben Jonson's account of what followed this, given to Drummond, is amusing: "The report was that we should then have had our ears cut and noses. After our delivery, I banqueted with my friends; there was Camden, Selden, and others; at the midst of the feast my old mother drank to me, and showed me a paper she had (if the sentence had taken execution) to have mixed in the prison among my drink, which was full of lusty strong poison, and that she was no churl, she told, she intended first to have drunk of it herself." It may be that after this event Jonson withdrew, under Lord Aubigny's protection, to the country for awhile, since we hear little of him for some few years. He returned, however, to write


BEN: IONSON

his

VOLPONE

Or

THE FOXE.

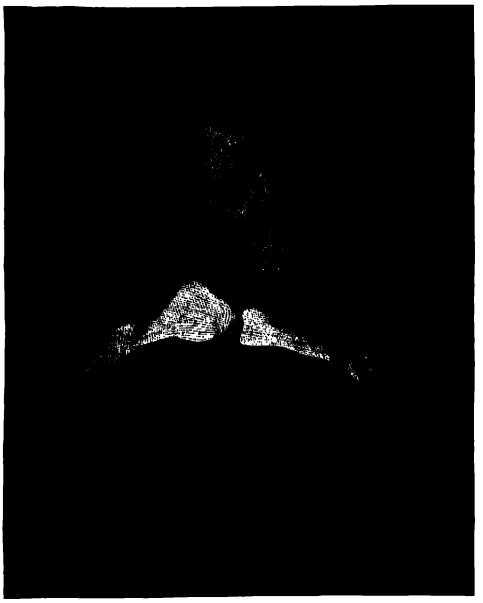
— *Simul & iucunda, & idonea dicere vitæ.*

Printed for *Thomas Thorppe.*
1607.

Title-page of Ben Jonson's "Volpone," 1607

plays for the Children of the Revels, and he was now in great force. *The Silent Woman*, acted in 1609, *The Alchemist* in 1610, and *Catiline* in 1611, display the powers of Ben Jonson at their most characteristic altitudes. Nor, in its own way, is lower praise deserved by the rich London comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*, produced in 1614. Before this date Jonson had been sent to Paris by Sir Walter Raleigh, as tutor to his young son, a responsible situation for which the poet, by his own confession, was ill-fitted. After his return to London, Jonson collected his works in one folio volume in 1616, and in the same year produced his comedy, *The Devil is an Ass*. This showed a strange decline in power, and Ben Jonson may have been conscious of this, for he wrote no more plays for nine years. He turned his attention to other branches of work, and particularly to the composition of masques. In the summer of 1618 he walked from London to Scotland, in spite of Bacon's dissuasion, who "said to him he loved not to see poesy go on other feet than poetical *dactylus* and *spondæus*." He met the poet Drummond in Edinburgh and was invited by him to stay at his house at Hawthornden. Drummond took invaluable notes of Jonson's conversation, the advantages of which he enjoyed until January 19, 1619; he also drew a somewhat caustic sketch of his burly guest himself: "He is a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend than a jest; . . . he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but, if he be well answered, at himself . . .; oppressed with fantasy, which hath ever mastered his reason." Jonson intended to write a fishing pastoral about Loch Lomond, and a description of his "foot-pilgrimage." The latter was certainly written, but it perished in the fire which soon after destroyed Jonson's valuable library. In 1623 he wrote the famous poem to the memory of "my beloved Master William Shakespeare," which appeared in the First Folio. In 1625 he reappeared on the public stage with the comedy of *The Staple of News*. This was followed by *The New Inn*, in 1629; *The Magnetic Lady*, in 1632; and *A Tale of a Tub*, in 1633. These are the plays of Ben Jonson's decline, harshly but justly described by Dryden as his "dotages." The obvious decline of power in these works (although there is beautiful poetry in *The New Inn*) was doubtless connected with the poet's physical condition, for in the early months of 1626 he had been attacked by paralysis. He laboured under many infirmities, and particularly under an unwieldy shape. He described himself to Lady Covell as—

a tardy, cold,
Unprofitable chattel, fat and old,



Inigo Jones
From a copy of the portrait by Van Dyck

Laden with belly, who doth hardly approach
His friends but to break chairs or crack a couch,
Whose weight is twenty stone within two pound.

In 1628 he accepted the sinecure of chronologer to the City of London, but he produced nothing, and in 1631 "the barbarous court of aldermen withdrew their chandlerly pension for verjuice and mustard." He quarrelled with Inigo Jones, and lost his place at Court as masque-maker. He sank into great poverty, but the kindness of the King gave some comfort to his latest years. Ben Jonson died on August 6, 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, under a plain slab, on which the words, "O rare Ben Jonson!" were afterwards carved. His charming fragment of a pastoral, *The Sad Shepherd*, was posthumously published in 1641. The decease of Jonson was treated almost as a national event, and he was mourned by all the poets of the age.



Ben Jonson's Tomb in Westminster Abbey

From "THE ALCHEMIST."

Mam. We will be brave, Puffe, now we have the medicine
My meat shall all come in in Indian shells,
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies;
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,
Boil'd in the spirit of Sol, and dissolved pearl,
(Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy)
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamant and carbuncle.
My footboy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,
Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have
The beards of barbels served, instead of salads;
Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling unctuous paps
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Dress'd with an exquisite and poignant sauce;
For which, I 'll say unto my cook, "There 's gold;
Go forth, and be a knight."

Face. Sir, I 'll go look
A little, how it heightens.
Mam. Do.—My shirts
I 'll have of taffata-sarsnet, soft and light
As cobwebs; and, for all my other raiment,
It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,
Were he to teach the world riot anew.
My gloves of fishes' and birds' skins, perfumed
With gums of paradise, and eastern air.
Sur. And do you think to have the stone with this?
Mam. No, I do think to have all this with the stone.



Figures designed by Inigo Jones for a Masque

Sur. Why, I have heard, he must be *homo frugi*,
A pious, holy, and religious man,
One free from mortal sin, a very virgin——
Mam. That makes it——Sir, he is so. But I buy it.
My venture brings it me. He, honest wretch,
A notable, superstitious, good soul,
Has worn his knees bare, and his slippers bald,
With prayer and fasting for it; and, sir, let him
Do it alone, for me, still. Here he comes.
Not a profane word, afore him: 'tis poison

From "THE SAD SHEPHERD."

Alken. Know ye the witch's dell?
Scarlet. No more than I do know the walks of hell.
Alk. Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell
Down in a pit o'ergrown with brakes and briars,
Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,
Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,
'Mongst graves and grots, near an old charnel-house,
Where you shall find her sitting in her form,
As fearful, and melancholic, as that
She is about; with caterpillars' kells,
And knotty cobwebs, rounded in with spells.
Then she steals forth to relief, in the fogs,
And rotten mists, upon the fens and bogs,
Down to the drowned lands of Lincolnshire;
To make ewes cast their lambs, swine eat their farrow;
The housewife's tun not work, nor the milk churn;
Writhe children's wrists, and suck their breath in sleep;
Get vials of their blood; and where the sea
Casts up his slimy ooze, search for a weed
To open locks with, and to rivet charms,
Planted about her, in the wicked seat
Of all her mischiefs, which are manifold.
John. I wonder such a story could be told
Of her dire deeds.
Geo. I thought, a witch's banks
Had enclosed nothing but the merry pranks
Of some old woman.
Scar. Yes, her malice more.
Scath. As it would quickly appear, had we the store
Of his collects.
Geo. Ay, this good learned man
Can speak her right.
Scar. He knows her shifts and haunts.
Alk. And all her wiles and turns. The venom'd plants
Wherewith she kills; where the sad mandrake grows,
Whose groans are deathful; the dead numbing nightshade;
The stupefying hemlock; adder's tongue,
And martagan; the shrieks of luckless owls,
We hear, and croaking night-crows in the air;
Green-bellied snakes; blue fire-drakes in the sky;
And giddy flitter-mice with leather wings;
The scaly beetles, with their habergeons
That make a humming murmur as they fly;
There, in the stocks of trees, white fays do dwell,
And span-long elves that dance about a pool,
With each a little changeling in their arms:
The airy spirits play with falling stars.
And mount the sphere of fire, to kiss the moon;
While she sits reading by the glow-worm's light,
Or rotten wood, o'er which the worm hath crept,
The baneful schedule of her nocent charms,
And binding characters, through which she wounds
Her puppets, the *sigilla* of her witchcraft.
All this I know, and I will find her for you;
And show you her sitting in her form; I 'll lay
My hand upon her; make her throw her scut

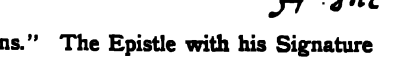
THE EPISTLE.

Humanitye, is not the leaſt honor of yᵒ Wreath. For
if once the worthy Profeſſors of theſe learnings ſhall
come (as heretofore they were) to be the care of
Princes, the Crownes theyd Soueraignes weare will
not more adorne theyd Temples; nor theyd ſtampes
liue longer in theyr Medalls, than in ſuch ſubiects
labors Poetry, my Lord, is not borne wth euery man;
nor euery day: And, in her generall right, it is now
my minute to thanke yᵒ Highneſſe, who not only
do honor her wth yᵒ fauor, but are curious to exa-
mine how wth yᵒ eyes, & inquire into her beauties,
& ſtrengths. Where, though it hath prou'd a Worke
of ſome difficultie to me to reſerue the particular
authorities (according to yᵒ gracious command, & a
deſire borne out of iudgment) to theſe things, wth
quite obl of fulneſſe, & memory of my former
readings; yet, now I haue ouercome it, the reward
that matter moſt is double to mee wth: wch is, that
thereby, yᵒ excellent Vnderſtanding will not only inſtruct
me to yᵒ owne knowledge, but decline the
ſtiffneſſe of others originall Ignorance, already
growne to cenſure. For wth ſingular benitie, if my
Fate (moſt excellent Prince, & only Delicacy of
mankind) ſhall reſerue me to the eye of yᵒ Actions,
whether in the Campe, or the Councell-Chamber, &
I may write, at nights, the deedes of yᵒ dayes; I
will then labor to bring forth ſome Workes as worthy
thy of yᵒ fame, as my Ambition therin is of yᵒ
pardon.

By the moſt trew admirer of yᵒ Highneſſe Vertues,

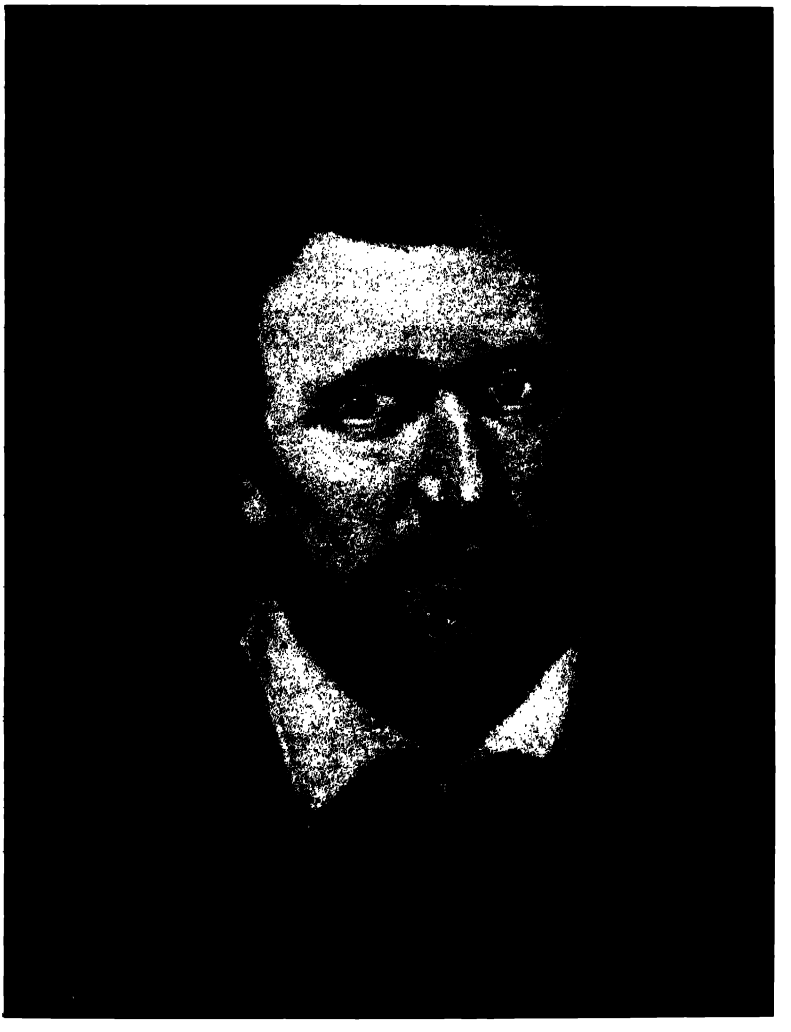
And moſt hearty Celebrater of them.

Ben: Jonſon.



A page from Ben Jonson's "Masque of Queens." The Epistle with his Signature

British Museum, Showcase IX.



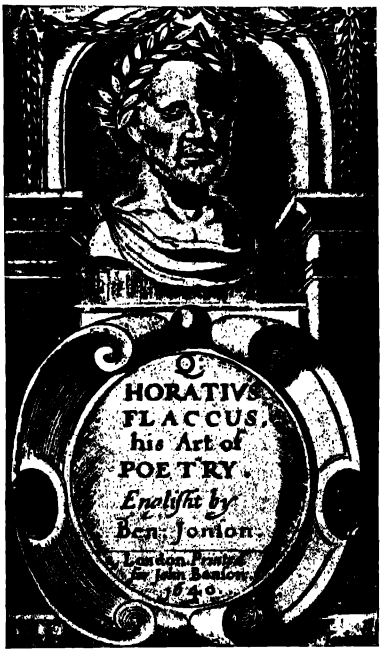
Ben Jonson.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY GERARD HONTHORST.

Along her back, when she doth start before us.
But you must give her law; and you shall see her
Make twenty leaps and doubles, cross the paths,
And then squat down beside us.
John. Crafty crone,
I long to be at the sport, and to report it.
Scar. We 'll make this hunting of the witch as famous
As any other blast of venery.
Geo. If we could come to see her, cry *so ho* once——
Alk. That I do promise, or I 'm no good hag-finder.

The Masque, a form of entertainment in which music, architecture, and dancing were combined with lyrical poetry, was highly popular in the reign of James I., and in the preparation of these pageants Jonson excelled all his contemporaries, although Campion and Daniel were also skilful. In these elaborate and fanciful pieces we often find delicate snatches of song, as this from *The Masque of Beauty* (1609):

So Beauty on the waters stood,
When Love had severed earth from flood!
So when he parted air from fire
He did with concord all inspire!
And then a motive he them taught,
That elder than himself was thought;
Which thought was, yet, the child of earth,
For Love is older than his birth.

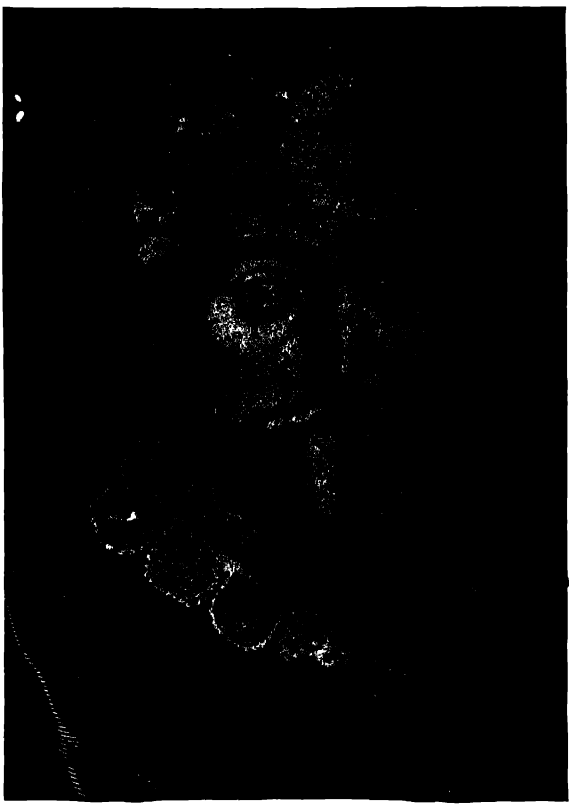


Frontispiece to Ben Jonson's "Horace"

There is no trace of the strict Jonsonian buskin in FRANCIS BEAUMONT and JOHN FLETCHER; as even contemporary critics perceived, they simply continued the pure romanticism of Shakespeare, and they seemed to carry it further and higher. We no longer think their noon brighter than his "dawning hours," but we admit that in a certain sense the great Twin Brethren proceeded beyond him in their warm, loosely-girdled plays. They exaggerated all the dangerous elements which he had held restrained; they proceeded, in fact, downwards, towards the inevitable decadence, gay with all the dolphin colours of approaching death. It is difficult to assign to either writer his share in the huge and florid edifice which bears their joint names. Their own age attributed to Fletcher the "keen treble" and to Beaumont the "deep bass"—comedy, that is, and tragedy respectively. Modern investigation has found less and less in their work which can be definitely ascribed to Beaumont, who, indeed, died so early as 1616. It is generally believed that the partnership lasted no longer than from 1608 to 1611, and that the writing of only some dozen out of the entire fifty-five plays was involved in it. Were it not that the very noblest are among these few, which include the *Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster*, *A King and no King* and the *Knight*

of the Burning Pestle, we might almost disregard the shadowy name of Beaumont, and treat this whole mass of dramatic literature as belonging to Fletcher, who went on writing alone, or with Massinger, until shortly before his death in 1625. The chronological sequence of these dramas, only about ten of which were printed during Fletcher's lifetime, remains the theme of bold and contradictory conjecture.

We have to observe in these glowing and redundant plays a body of lyrico-dramatic literature, proceeding directly from and parallel to the models instituted by Shakespeare, and continued for nearly ten years after his death. Nothing else in English is so like Shakespeare as a successful scene from a romantic comedy of Fletcher. Superficially, the language, the verse, the mental attitude often seem absolutely identical, and it is a singular tribute to the genius of the younger poet that he can endure the parallel for a moment. It is only for a moment; if we take Fletcher at his very best—in the ardent and melodious scenes of the *False One*, for instance, where, amid an array of the familiar Roman names, we find him desperately and directly challenging comparison with *Antony and Cleopatra*—we have only to turn from the shadow back to the substance to see how thin and unreal is this delicately-tinted, hectic, and phantasmal picture of passion by the side of Shakespeare's solid humanity. Jonson has lost the stage because his personages are not human beings, but types of character, built up from without, and vitalised by no specific or personal springs of action. Beaumont and Fletcher are equally dead from the theatrical point of view, but from an opposite cause: their figures have not proved too hard and opaque for perennial interest, but too filmy and undulating; they possess not too much, but too little solidity. They are vague embodiments of instincts, faintly palpitating with desires and emulations and eccentricities, but not built up and set on firm feet by the practical genius of dramatic creation.



Francis Beaumont

After an engraving by Philip Audinet

Yet no conception of English poetry is complete without a reference to these beautiful, sensuous, incoherent plays. The Alexandrine genius of Beaumont and Fletcher was steeped through and through in beauty; and so quickly did they follow the fresh morning of Elizabethan poetry that their premature sunset was tinged with dewy and "fresh-quilted" hues of dawn. In the short span of their labours they seem to take hold of the entire field of the drama, from birth to death, and Fletcher's quarter of a century helps us to see how rapid and direct was the decline. If the talent of Jonson had been more flexible, if the taste of Fletcher had not been radically so relaxed and luxurious, these two great writers should have carried English drama on after the death of Shakespeare—with less splendour, of course, yet with its character unimpaired. Unfortunately, neither of these excellent men, though all compact with talent, had the peculiar gift opportune to the moment's need, and ten years undid what it had taken ten years to create and ten more to sustain.


The Maids Tragedie.

AS IT HATH BEENE

diuers times Acted at the *Black-Friers* by the Kings Maieſties Seruants.

Newly peruſed, augmented, and inlarged, This ſecond Impreſſion.

ASPATIA. AMINTOR.

LONDON,

Printed for *Francis Conſtable*, and are to be ſold at the White LION in *Paules* Church-yard. 1622.

Title-page of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Maid's Tragedie," 1622

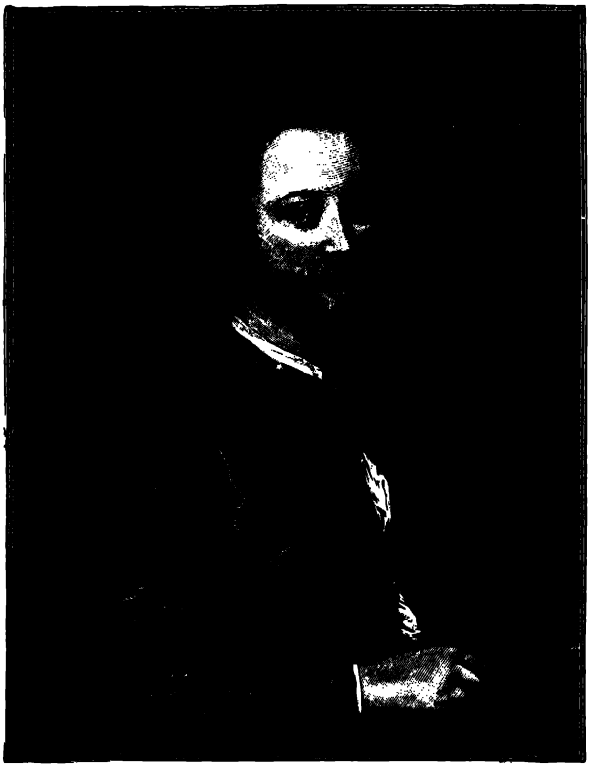
Comparatively little has been preserved about the lives of the "great Twin Brethren" of Jacobean drama. **Francis Beaumont** (1584–1616) was one of the sons of the judge of the same name, of Grace Dieu. He entered Pembroke College (Broadgates Hall) early in 1597, and three years later came up to London to study at the Inner Temple. Here he is supposed to have written the rich Ovidian paraphrase of *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*, published anonymously in 1602. He early engaged the affections of Ben Jonson, who wrote:

> How do I love thee, Beaumont, and thy Muse,
> That unto me dost such religion use.

His acquaintance with Fletcher dated from about 1606, from which time until 1611 we are to believe that the two friends constantly collaborated. Beaumont married in 1613, and probably retired to the country. He died in 1616, and was

buried in Westminster Abbey. His poems were not collected until 1640, when they were carelessly put together with several pieces of dubious authenticity.

John Fletcher (1579–1625) was born at Rye, while his father, the future bishop, was the incumbent of that parish. In 1583 the Fletchers removed to Peterborough, and in 1589 to Bristol. The poet was sent in 1591 to Bene't College (Corpus), Cambridge, of which his father had been president; he became "bible-clerk" there in 1593. At this point we lose all sight of him until, about 1606, we find him engaged with Beaumont in the writing of plays. Aubrey has left an account of their subsequent mode of life: "They lived together, on the Bankside, not far from the playhouse, both bachelors, the same clothes, cloak, &c., between them." Fuller says that on one occasion they were threatened with arrest for high treason, because, while they arranged one of their plots together, one of them shouted out, "I'll kill the King!" They met other poets and actors of the day at the Mermaid Tavern, and Beaumont in a burst of autobiography as rare as it is welcome says:

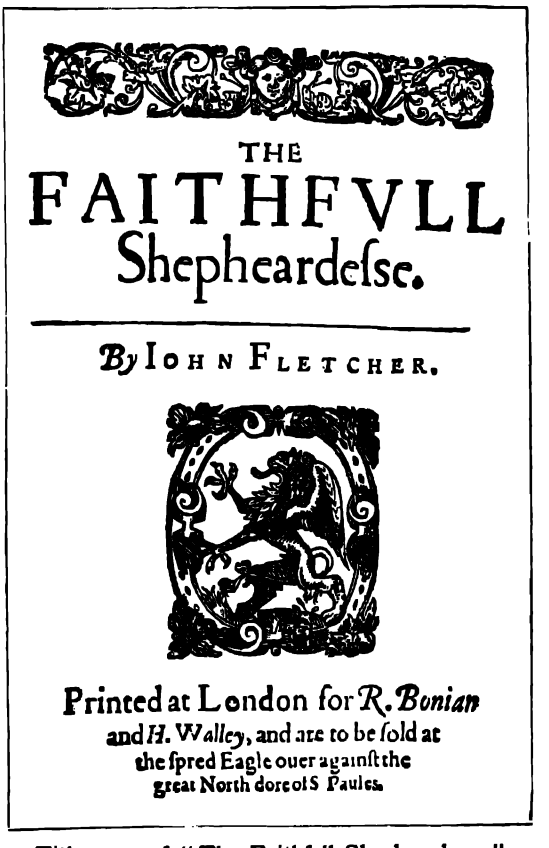


John Fletcher
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

> What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that every one from whom they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life; then, when there hath been thrown
> Wit able enough to justify the town
> For three days past—wit that might warrant be
> For the whole city to talk foolishly,
> Till that were cancelled; and, when that was gone,
> We left an air behind us, which alone
> Was able to make the two next companies
> Right witty.

Fletcher outlived Beaumont by nine years, and died of the plague in London; he was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, on August 29, 1625. A great deal of vain investigation has been expended on the dates, authorship, and distribution of the plays attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher. What is actually known is

considerable, and may be thus summarised. Fifty-five plays are extant which are more or less definitely connected with the name of Fletcher and of some collaborator. Of these, *The Woman-Hater* was printed as early as 1607, and *The Faithful Shepherdess* about 1610. Then, during the lifetime of Beaumont, were printed three pieces which are admitted to be the joint work of that poet and of Fletcher—these are, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613), *Cupid's Revenge* (1615), and *The Scornful Lady*. After Beaumont's death, but during the life of Fletcher, four more quartos were published, all by the joint authors—*A King No King* (1619), *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster* (1620), and *Thierry and Theodoret*. After the death of Fletcher, a play was now and then issued, until in 1647 was published the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, in which thirty-five new plays were included, but none of those already issued reprinted. These latter, with some others, were included in the second folio of 1679. The general opinion of critics attributes about twenty-seven of the plays to Fletcher alone, who was, quite certainly, the predominant partner; about fourteen to Beaumont and Fletcher in concert; two, *Henry VIII.* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, to Fletcher and Shakespeare; four or five to Fletcher and Massinger; and the rest to Fletcher in collaboration with Rowley or Shirley or Field or Middleton. A tragi-comedy of *Cardenio*, attributed to Fletcher and Shakespeare, existed in MS. until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Warburton's cook lighted her kitchen-fire with it. The student should be warned that nowhere in the history of English literature has bibliography tended to run more joyously to riot than in the attribution of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. Even about the following lovely song, which has been said to be certainly Fletcher's, and yet evidently Shakespeare's, to dogmatise is impossible:


THE
FAITHFVLL
Shepheardeſse.

By IOHN FLETCHER.

Printed at London for R. Bonian
and H. Walley, and are to be ſold at
the ſpred Eagle ouer againſt the
great North dore of S Paules.

Title-page of "The Faithfull Shepheardesse"

Roses, their sharp spines being gone,
Not royal in their smells alone,
But in their hue;
Maiden-pinks, of odour faint,
Daisies smell-less, yet most quaint,
And sweet thyme true;

Primrose, eldest child of Ver,
Merry spring-time's harbinger,
With her bells dim;
Oxlips in their cradles growing,
Marigolds on death-beds blowing,
Larks' heels trim.



John Fletcher

Engraved portrait in the second edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays

All, dear Nature's children sweet,
Lie 'fore bride and bride-groom's feet,
Blessing their sense!
Not an angel of the air,
Bird melodious or bird fair,
Be absent hence!

The crow, the slanderous cuckoo, nor
The boding raven, or chough hoar,
Nor chatting pie,
May on our bride-house perch or sing,
Or with them any discord bring,
But from it fly!

From "PHILASTER"

(*How the boy Bellario was found*)

I have a boy
Sent by the gods, I hope to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court; hunting the buck,
I found him sitting by a fountain side,
Of which he borrow'd some to quench his thirst,
And paid the nymph again as much in tears;
A garland lay him by, made by himself,
Of many several flowers, bred in the bay,
Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness
Delighted me: but ever when he turn'd
His tender eyes upon 'em, he would weep,
As if he meant to make 'em grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I ask'd him all his story;
He told me that his parents gentle died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,

Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,
Which still, he thank'd him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did show
What every flower, as country people hold,
Did signify; and how all order'd thus,
Express'd his grief: and to my thoughts did read
The prettiest lecture of his country art
That could be wish'd, so that, methought, I could
Have studied it. I gladly entertain'd him,
Who was as glad to follow, and have got
The trustiest, loving'st, and the gentlest boy,
That ever master kept; him will I send
To wait on you, and bear our hidden love.

From "WIT WITHOUT MONEY"

(*The Humours of a Prodigal Nephew*)

Lovegood. But say these means were honest, will they last, sir?
Valentine. Far longer than your jerkin, and wear fairer. . . .
Your mind's enclosed, nothing lies open nobly;
Your very thoughts are hinds, that work on nothing
But daily sweat and trouble: were my way
So full of dirt as this ('tis true) I'd shift it.
Are my acquaintance graziers? But, sir, know;
No man that I'm allied to in my living,
But makes it equal whether his own use
Or my necessity pull first; nor is this forced,
But the mere quality and poisure of goodness,
And do you think I venture nothing equal?
Lovegood. You pose me, cousin.
Valentine. What's my knowledge, uncle? Is't not worth money?
What's my understanding? my travel? reading? wit?
All these digested? my daily making men,
Some to speak, that too much phlegm had frozen up;
Some other that spoke too much, to hold their peace,
And put their tongues to pensions: some to wear their clothes,
And some to keep them: these are nothing, uncle?
Besides these ways, to teach the way of nature,
A manly love, community to all
That are deservers, not examining
How much or what's done for them: it is wicked. . . .
Are not these ways as honest, as persecuting
The starved inheritance with musty corn
The very rats were fain to run away from?
Or selling rotten wood by the pound, like spices,
Which gentlemen do after burn by the ounces?
Do not I know your way of feeding beasts
With grains, and windy stuff, to blow up butchers?
Your racking pastures, that have eaten up,
As many singing shepherds, and their issues,
As Andalusia breeds? These are authentic.
I tell you, sir, I would not change ways with you;
Unless it were, to sell your state that hour,
And (if 'twere possible) to spend it then too;
For all your beans in Rumnillo: now you know me.

The ponderous GEORGE CHAPMAN has a triple claim upon the attention of the student; he was an ambitious philosophical or gnomic poet, he was the

author of that valuable translation of Homer which has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, and he was the author, apparently in later middle life, of a cluster of bombastic historical tragedies and loosely articulated romantic comedies which have been admired to excess by thoroughgoing fanatics of the Jacobean drama, but in which, to a common observer, the faults seem vastly to outweigh the rare and partial merits. It is exceedingly difficult in a few words to offer any intelligible judgment on the works of Chapman. His was an austere and an impassioned devotion to the art of poetry. He loved what one of his contemporaries called the "full and heightened style," and his aim in it was dignified; but even Mr. Swinburne, who has an extreme partiality for Chapman, and has dedicated an entire volume to the analysis



George Chapman

From the portrait by W. Pass in "The Crowne of all Homer's Workes," 1624

of his writings, has to admit that "the height indeed is somewhat giddy, and the fulness too often tends or threatens to dilate into tumidity." His prose plays, which are the most readable of Chapman's works, are not satisfactory pieces of stagecraft, and his haughty suspicion of the whole sex of woman is as absurd as it is ungraceful. No one shines so much in quotation, or is seen to so partial an advantage in purple passages as the diffuse, pedantic and convulsive Chapman.

It is supposed that **George Chapman** (*d.* 1634) was born so early as 1559, and in the neighbourhood of Hitchin. We know little or nothing about his early career, but at the age of about thirty-five he appears in London, actively engaged in literary labour. His earliest production, *The Shadow of Night* (1594), is of an astounding obscurity; it was followed in 1595 by another "fat and foggy" poem,

Ovid's Banquet of Sense, in which, however, some splendid phrases, such as, "the downward-burning flame of her rich hair," and

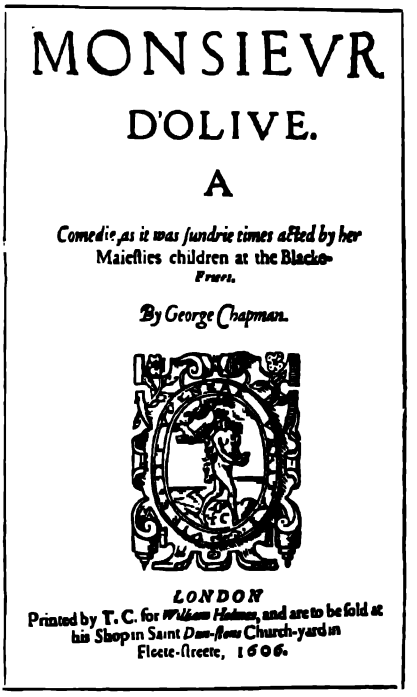
> as still as Vesper's hair
> When not an aspen-leaf is stirred in air,

gave promise of better things. Chapman's earliest known play is *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598); in the same year, greatly daring, he completed Marlowe's poem of *Hero and Leander*. It is supposed that he was most active as a playwright between 1606 and 1612, during which time he produced *Bussy d'Ambois* and *The Conspiracy of Byron* among tragedies, and *Monsieur d'Olive* and *May-day* among comedies. His magnificent versions of Homer occupied the press at intervals from 1598 to about 1624. The best of Chapman's poems is *The Tears of Peace* (1609), in which occurs the exquisite passage about the robin, the bird

> that loves humans best,
> That hath the bugle eyes and rosy breast,
> And is the yellow Autumn's nightingale.

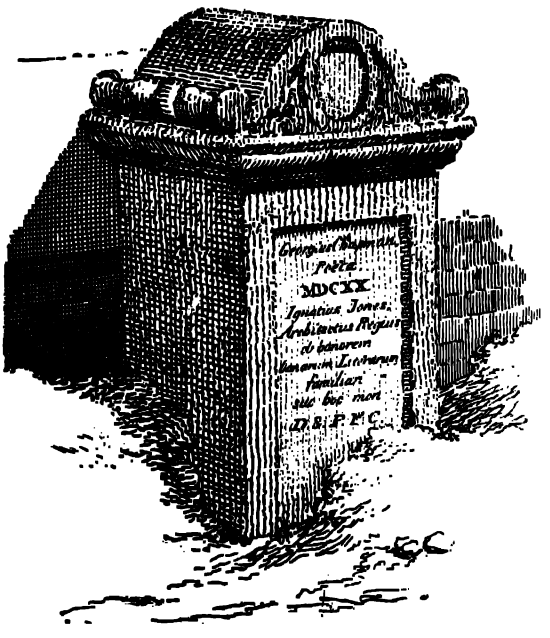
Wood tells us that Chapman was "a person of most reverend aspect, religious and temperate." The following soliloquy, from *Bussy d'Ambois* (1608), gives a very favourable impression of Chapman's ponderous and haughty rhetoric:

> What dismal change is here? The good old friar
> Is murdered, being made known to serve my love.
> Note what he wants! He wants his utmost weed,
> He wants his life and body. Which of these
> Shall be the want he means, and may supply me
> With any fit forewarning? This strange vision—
> Together with the dark prediction
> Used by the Prince of Darkness that was raised
> By this embodied shadow—stirs my thoughts
> With reminition of the spirit's promise,
> Who told me, that, by any invocation
> I should have power to raise him. . . .
> Now then, I will claim
> Performance of his free and gentle vow
> To appear in greater light, and make more plain
> His rugged oracle. I long to know
> How my dear mistress fares, and be inform'd
> What hand she now holds on the troubled blood
> Of her incensed lord. Methought the spirit,
> When he had utter'd his perplex'd presage,
> Threw his changed countenance headlong into clouds:


MONSIEVR
D'OLIVE.
A
Comedie, as it was sundrie times acted by her Maieſties children at the Blacke-*Fryers.*
By George Chapman.
LONDON
Printed by T. C. for *William Hadman*, and are to be ſold at his Shop in Saint *Dun-ſtons* Church-yard in Fleete-ſtreete, 1606.

Title-page of George Chapman's "Monsieur D'Olive," 1606

His forehead bent, as it would hide his face:
He knock'd his chin against his darken'd breast,
And struck a churlish silence through his powers.—
Terror of Darkness: O thou king of Flames,
That with thy music-footed horse dost strike
The clear light out of crystal, on dark earth,
And hurl'st instructive fire about the world;
Wake, wake the drowsy and enchanted night,
That sleeps with dead eyes in this heavy riddle.
Or thou, great Prince of Shades, where never sun
Sticks his far-darted beams; whose eyes are made
To see in darkness, and see ever best
Where sense is blindest; open now the heart
Of thy abashed oracle, that, for fear
Of some ill it includes, would fain lie hid;
And rise thou with it in thy greater light.



Chapman's Tomb in St. Giles' Church

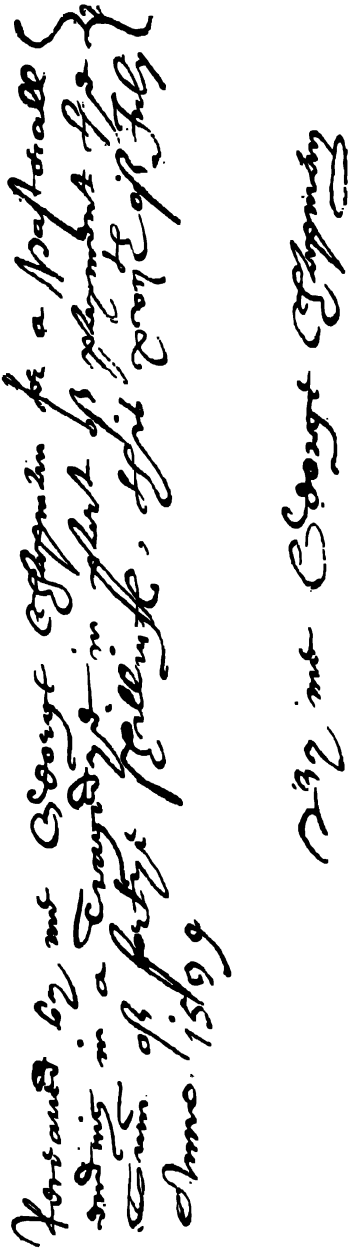
Older than all the other playwrights who will be treated in this chapter, except Chapman, THOMAS DEKKER preserved something of the simplicity of the earlier Elizabethan age. He wrote with great simplicity, and he had the art of transfiguring the little virtues of everyday existence, emphasising their homely values and clothing them with poetic fancy. There is something of the child about Dekker's turns of thought, so pretty, extravagant and touching. It was his desire to

write on paper
Made of those turning leaves of heaven, the clouds,
Or speak with angels' tongues,

and when he succeeds, it is with an air so delicate and so amusing that criticism has often been disarmed in his presence and has used language concerning him that the general tenor of his work cannot be held to deserve. His early comedies, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus*, are entertaining and often poetical, but extremely primitive in form, and practice never made Dekker perfect in the art of constructing a play. He rarely, in later years, trusted implicitly to his own skill, and in by far the most powerful works with which his name is connected, *The Honest Whore* and *The Virgin Martyr*, he was aided by better constructors of a play than himself; nor can we tell how much of what we admire in the first case is due to Middleton,

and in the second to Massinger. In such a tirade as the following, taken from *Old Fortunatus*, we see that the versification and general poetical style of Dekker form an interesting link between the Predecessors and the Successors of Shakespeare :

Fortunat. O, whither am I rapt beyond myself ?
More violent conflicts fight in every thought
Than his whose fatal choice Troy's downfall wrought.
Shall I contract myself to Wisdom's love ?
Then I lose Riches ; and a wise man poor
Is like a sacred book that's never read ;
To himself he lives and to all else seems dead.
This age thinks better of a gilded fool,
Than of a threadbare saint in Wisdom's school.
I will be strong : then I refuse long life ;
And though mine arm should conquer twenty worlds,
There's a lean fellow beats all conquerors :
The greatest strength expires with loss of breath,
The mightiest in one minute stoop to death.
Then take long life, or health ; should I do so,
I might grow ugly, and that tedious scroll
Of months and years much misery may enroll :
Therefore I'll beg for beauty ; yet I will not :
That fairest cheek hath oftentimes a soul
Leprous as sin itself, than hell more foul.
The wisdom of this world is idiotism ;
Strength a weak reed ; health sickness' enemy,
And it at length will have the victory.
Beauty is but a painting ; and long life
Is a long journey in December gone,
Tedious and full of tribulation.
Therefore, dread sacred empress, make me rich :
My choice is store of gold ; the rich are wise :
He that upon his back rich garments wears
Is wise, though on his head grow Midas' ears.
Gold is the strength, the sinews of the world,
The health, the soul, the beauty most divine ;
A mask of gold hides all deformities ;
Gold is heaven's physic, life's restorative ;
O, therefore make me rich !



Facsimile Receipt for 40s. paid for "Pastoral Ending in a Tragedy" from Chapman to Philip Henslowe
British Museum, MSS. 30262

The interesting prose of Dekker will be dealt with in the succeeding chapter.

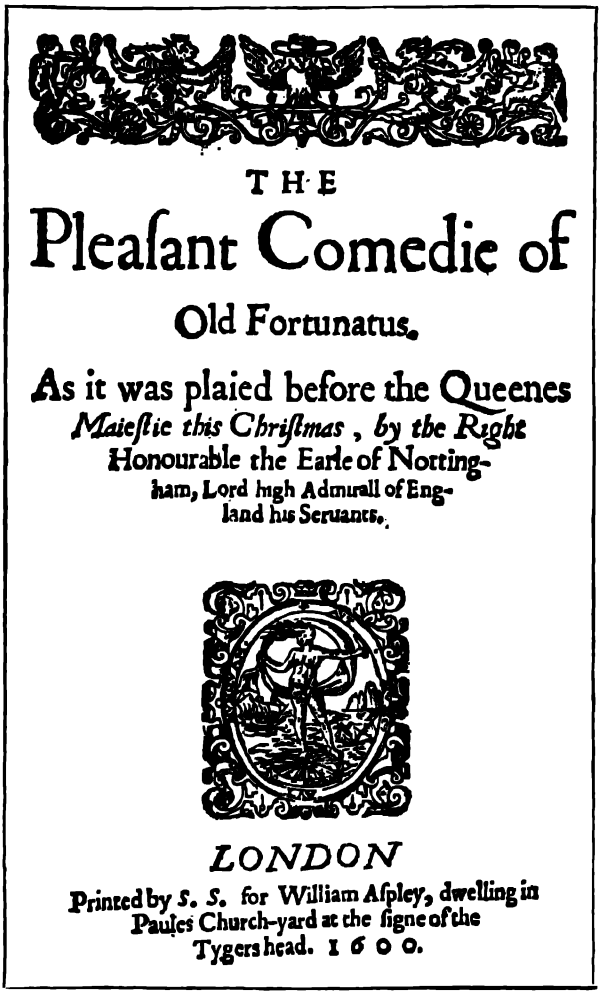
Although the drama in England had turned away decisively from imitation of the Latin tragedies attributed to Seneca, which had so much influence on the European stage, yet in one particular our playwrights were encouraged by the traditions of the *Senecanum opus* to foster a taste for classic horrors. There was a thirst in the English playgoer for terrible pleasures, for wild gusts

of emotional excitement, for appeals to the most primitive instincts of revenge and fear. These were generously indulged in the irregular drama of Elizabeth and James, without much consideration of what is called taste; they were indulged grossly and fiercely in plays the very conception of which was disfigured by the violence of crime. It is curious to see with what a simplicity this was sometimes done. In the *Two Tragedies in One*, 1600, by Robert Yarrington, a play to which Charles Lamb was the first to call attention, the hero dismembers his victim on the stage in the presence of his sister, to whom he points out the armless and legless trunk, saying:

> Hark, Rachael! I will cross the water straight,
> And fling this middle mention of a man
> Into some ditch.

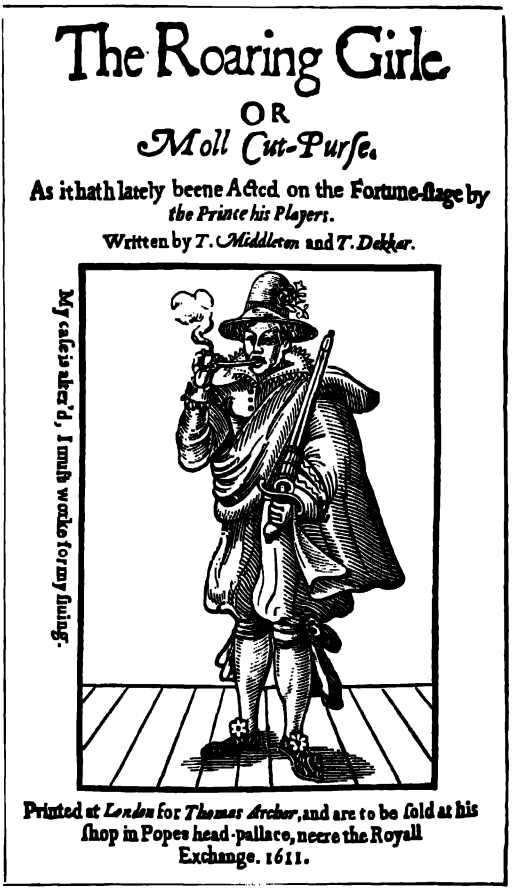
The crudity of this scene seems to exceed that in the *Hippolytus* of Seneca, where Theseus runs over the inventory of his son's fragments, "huc huc reliquias vehiti cari corporis," which has so often been quoted as the last expression of tragical insensibility.

The vehemence of exaggerated force, exhibited in a frenzied pursuit of what are called "strong situations," is a remarkable element in all the minor dramatic literature of this age. It is seen in the curious "domestic" tragedies, one of which has just been mentioned, in which familiar crimes of the day, interesting from the moral horror of their circumstances or the cruelty of their incidents, were rehearsed realistically before thrilled and terrified audiences. The dramatist loved to depict the rapid revolutions of the wheel of fortune, to show the assassins of to-day becoming the victims of to-morrow.


THE
Pleaſant Comedie of
Old Fortunatus.
As it was plaied before the Queenes *Maieſtie this Chriſtmas, by the Right* Honourable the Earle of Nottingham, Lord high Admirall of England his Seruants.
LONDON
Printed by *S. S.* for William Aſpley, dwelling in Paules Church-yard at the ſigne of the Tygers head. 1600.

Title-page of Dekker's "Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus," 1600

They took from contemporary history or legend themes in which they could plunge their audiences shuddering into the abysm of physical fear. Such tales as they loved to tell have become so rare in modern European chronicle that we were beginning to consider them impossible when the tragedy of Belgrade, in 1903, reminded us of the range of vindictive savagery. The nocturnal murder of Alexander and Draga was an episode, in all its sections, which seemed enacted in order that Tourneur or Chapman should arrange it in vehement blank verse. In the reign of Elizabeth and James a love of blood was kept alive by the frequent spectacle of sudden death. Of the audience of a London play-house the verse might have been recited with which the old Roman tragedy of *Octavia* had closed, "civis gaudet cruore." The more complete a massacre could be, the more hideous in its details, the more pitiless its motives, the readier a Jacobean audience was to welcome its presentment on the stage.


The Roaring Girle
OR
Moll Cut-Purse.
As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-stage by the Prince his Players.
Written by T. Middleton and T. Dekker.
My cafe is alter'd, I muſt worke for my living.
Printed at London for Thomas Archer, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in Popes head-pallace, neere the Royall Exchange. 1611.

Title-page of Dekker and Middleton's "Roaring Girle," 1611

Three writers of distinction stand out pre-eminent among the numerous caterers for this peculiar love of the horrible. In each the instinct of the poet prevailed, during lucid intervals, over the cult of mere agitation and terror; yet all three, if examined not by the light of their occasional passages of illumination and beauty, but in the lurid twilight of their complete works, are seen to be, from the stage point of view, melodramatists of the blood-curdling type, little interested in the sane development of a plot or the determination of shades of character. They are distinguished from one another, not by any difference of aim in their attitude to the stage and the public, but by their poetical equipment. Of the three, by far the greatest is JOHN WEBSTER, greater in some respects than any other English tragic poet except Shakespeare. Webster required but a closer grasp of style and a happier architecture to rank among the leading English poets. *The Duchess of Malfy*, and, in its more rudimentar

form, the earlier *White Devil*, are plays which are distinguished by a marvellous intensity of passion. Webster has so splended a sense of the majesty of death, of the mutability of human pleasures, and of the velocity and weight of destiny, that he rises to conceptions which have an Æschylean dignity; but, unhappily, he grows weary of sustaining them, his ideas of stage-craft are rudimentary and spectacular, and his single well-constructed play, *Appius and Virginia*, has a certain disappointing tameness. Most of the Jacobean dramatists are now read only in extracts, and this test is highly favourable to Webster, who strikes us as a very noble poet driven by the exigencies of fashion to write for a stage, the business of which he had not studied and in which he took no great interest. JOHN MARSTON, whose versification owes much to Marlowe, was a harsh and strident satirist, a screech-owl among the singing-birds; in the first decade of the seventeenth century he produced a series of vigorous rude tragedies and comedies which possess a character of their own, not sympathetic at all, but unique in its consistent note of caustic melancholy, and often brilliantly written. In CYRIL TOURNEUR the qualities of Marston and Webster are discovered driven to a grotesque excess. In the career of a soldier in the Netherlands fighting against the tyranny of Spain, he had in all probability inured his imagination to all spectacles of cruelty and outrage. He pours out what he remembers upon his dreadful page, and his two lurid tragedies surpass in extravagance of iniquity and profusion of ghastly innuendo all other compositions of their time. Cyril Tourneur is prince of those whose design is "to make our flesh creep," and occasionally he still succeeds.



Moll Cutpurse
From the "Roaring Girle"

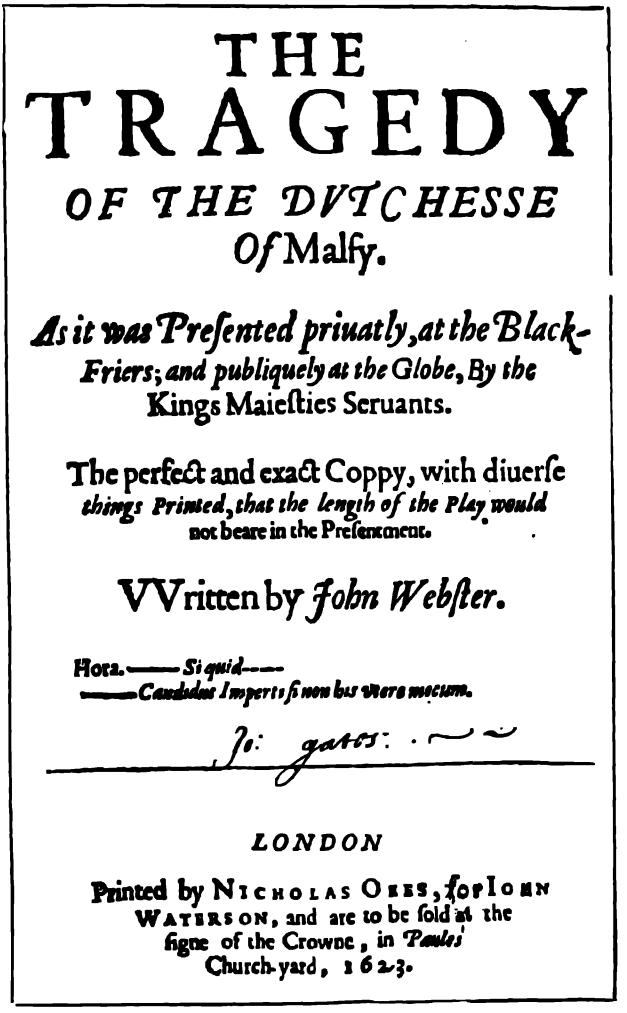
Of these three poets, probably born about the same time, little biography is preserved. **John Webster** (1575?–1625?) was the son of a London tailor, and was made free of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1604. Of the dates of his early plays, written in collaboration with Marston, Dekker, and others, little is exactly preserved. His tragedy of *The White Devil*, founded on the adventures of Vittoria Corombona, was acted, perhaps, in 1608, but not printed until 1612. The historical play called *Appius and Virginia*, the comedy of *The Devil's Law-Case*, and the tragedy of *The Duchess of Malfy* were his other dramatic productions. It is said that Webster was clerk of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and that he died in 1625.

Funeral Dirge for Marcello *in* "The White Devil"

Call for the robin-redbreast, and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To raise him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

From "The Duchess of Malfy"

Car. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers: alas!
What will you do with my lady? Call for help.
Duch. To whom? to our next neighbours? They are mad folks.
Bosola. Remove that noise.
Duch. Farewell, Cariola....
I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep. —Now what you please;
What death?
Bos. Strangling. Here are your executioners.
Duch. I forgive them.
The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' the lungs,
Would do as much as they do.
Bos. Doth not death fright you?
Duch. Who would be afraid on 't,
Knowing to meet such excellent company
In the other world?
Bos. Yet, methinks,
The manner of your death should much afflict you;
This cord should terrify you.
Duch. Not a whit.
What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
With diamonds? or to be smother'd
With cassia? or to be shot to death with pearls?
I know, death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits: and 'tis found


THE
TRAGEDY
OF THE DVTCHESSE
Of Malfy.

As it was Preſented priuatly, at the Black-Friers; and publiquely at the Globe, By the Kings Maieſties Seruants.

The perfect and exact Coppy, with diuerſe things Printed, that the length of the Play would not beare in the Preſentment.

VVritten by John Webſter.

Hora. —— Si quid——
——Candidus Imperti; ſi non his vtere mecum.

Jo: gatis.

LONDON

Printed by Nicholas Okes, for Iohn Waterson, and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the Crowne, in Paules Church-yard, 1623.

Title-page of Webster's "Duchess of Malfy," 1623



St. Andrew's Church, Holborn

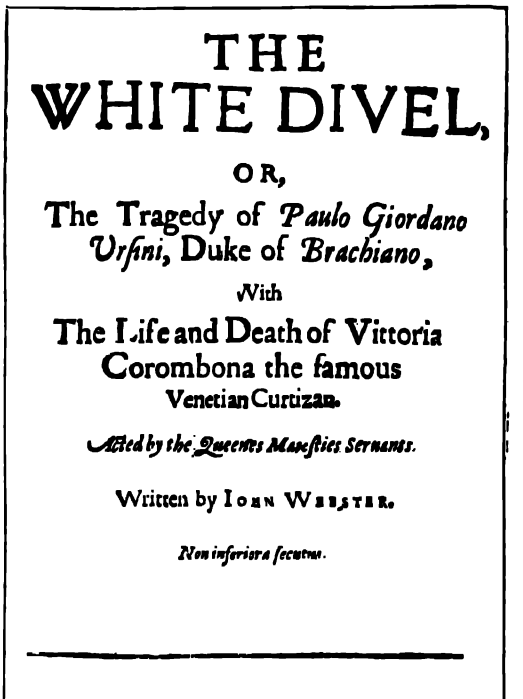
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep.
Go tell my brothers; when I am laid out,
They then may feed in quiet.
[*They strangle her, kneeling.*

From "THE DEVIL'S LAW-CASE"

Romelio. O, my lord, lie not idle:
The chiefest action for a man of great spirit
Is, never to be out of action. We should think;
The soul was never put into the body,
Which has so many rare and curious pieces
Of mathematical motion, to stand still.
Virtue is ever sowing of her seeds:
In the trenches for the soldier; in the wakeful study
For the scholar; in the furrows of the sea
For men of our profession: of all which
Arise and spring up honour.

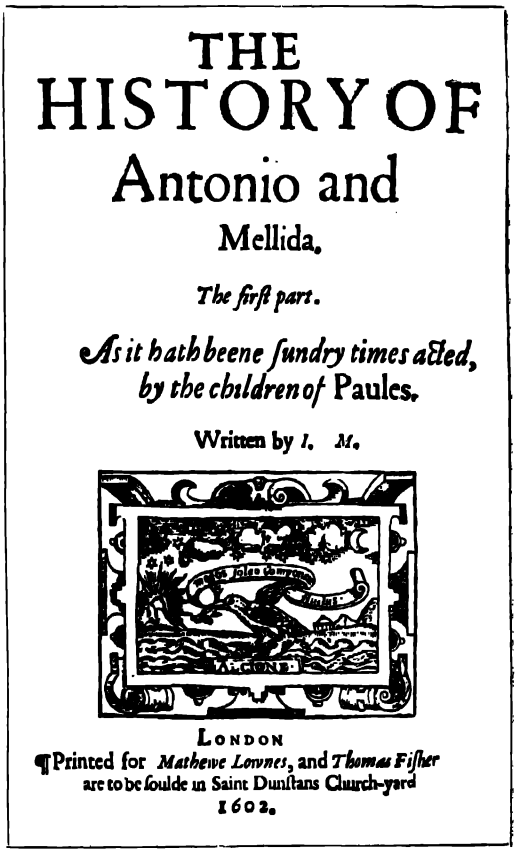
John Marston (1575–1634) was born at Coventry in 1575; his mother was an Italian. He went up to Brasenose College, Oxford, early in 1592, and took his degree two years later. The earliest works Marston is known to

They go on such strange geometrical hinges,
You may open them both ways; any way (for heaven's sake)
So I were out of your whispering: tell my brothers,
That I perceive, death (now I'm well awake)
Best gift is, they can give or I can take.
I would fain put off my last woman's fault;
I'd not be tedious to you. . . .
Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.
Yet stay, heaven gates are not so highly arch'd
As princes' palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees. Come, violent death,


THE
WHITE DIVEL,
OR,
The Tragedy of *Paulo Giordano Vrſini*, Duke of *Brachiano*,
With
The Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona the famous
Venetian Curtizan.
Acted by the Queenes Maieſties Seruants.
Written by IOHN WEBSTER.
Non inferiora ſecutus.
LONDON,
Printed by *N.O.* for *Thomas Archer*, and are to be ſold at his Shop in Popes head Pallace, neere the Royall Exchange. 1612.

Title-page of Webster's "White Divel," 1612

have published are his satires, called *The Scourge of Villany*, and the voluptuous, half-sarcastic romance in six-line stanza, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*, both of 1598. His bitterness of tongue was so great that he was nicknamed "Kinsayder," one who crops or "kinses" the tails of dogs. From 1601 to 1607 he seems to have lived by writing for the stage. His most important pieces are *Antonio and Mellida*, in two parts (1602); *The Malcontent* (1604); *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605); *Parasitaster; or, The Fawn* (1606); and *What You Will* (1607). He entered the Church, long held an incumbency in Hampshire or Wiltshire, and died in the parish of Aldermanbury on June 25, 1634.


THE
HISTORY OF
Antonio and
Mellida.

The first part.

As it hath beene sundry times acted, by the children of Paules.

Written by *I. M.*

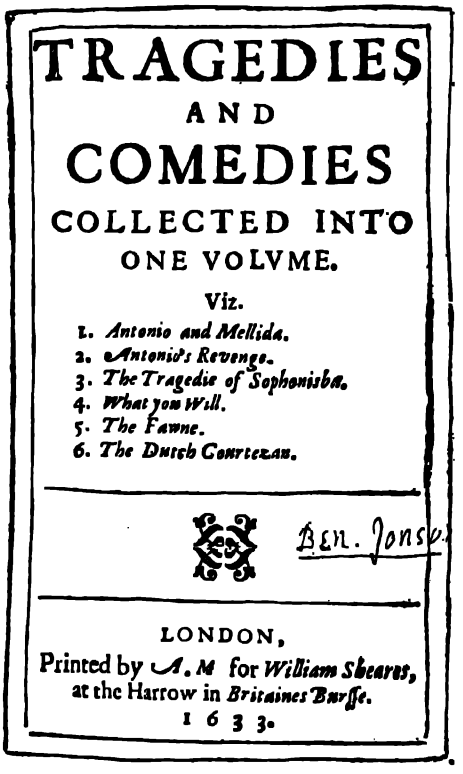
LONDON
¶Printed for *Mathewe Lownes*, and *Thomas Fisher* are to be soulde in Saint Dunstans Church-yard
1602.

Title-page of Marston's "Antonio and Mellida," 1602

THE PROLOGUE TO THE SECOND PART OF "ANTONIO AND MELLIDA" ("ANTONIO'S REVENGE")

The rawish dank of clumsy winter ramps
The fluent summer's vein: and drizzling sleet
Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the numb'd earth,
Whilst snarling gusts nibble the juiceless leaves
From the naked shuddering branch, and pills the skin
From off the soft and delicate aspects.
O, now methinks a sullen tragic scene
Would suit the time with pleasing congruence!
May we be happy in our weak devoir,
And all part pleased in most wish'd content.
But sweat of Hercules can ne'er beget
So blest an issue. Therefore we proclaim,
If any spirit breathes within this round
Uncapable of weighty passion,
(As from his birth being hugged in the arms
And nuzzled 'twixt the breasts of Happiness)
Who winks and shuts his apprehension up
From common sense of what men were, and are;
Who would not know what men must be: let such
Hurry amain from our black-visaged shows;
We shall affright their eyes. But if a breast,
Nail'd to the earth with grief; if any heart,
Pierced through with anguish, pant within this ring:
If there be any blood, whose heat is choked
And stifled with true sense of misery:

If aught of these strains fill this consort up,
They arrive most welcome. O, that our power
Could lackey or keep wing with our desires;
That with unused poise of style and sense
We might weigh massy in judicious scale!
Yet here's the prop that doth support our hopes:
When our scenes falter, or invention halts,
Your favour will give crutches to our faults.


TRAGEDIES
AND
COMEDIES
COLLECTED INTO
ONE VOLVME.
Viz.
1. *Antonio and Mellida.*
2. *Antonio's Revenge.*
3. *The Tragedie of Sophonisba.*
4. *What you Will.*
5. *The Fawne.*
6. *The Dutch Courtezan.*
Ben. Jonson.
LONDON,
Printed by A. M for *William Sheares*,
at the Harrow in *Britaines Burſſe*.
1633.

Title-page of Marston's "Tragedies and Comedies," 1633
From Ben Jonson's copy, with his autograph

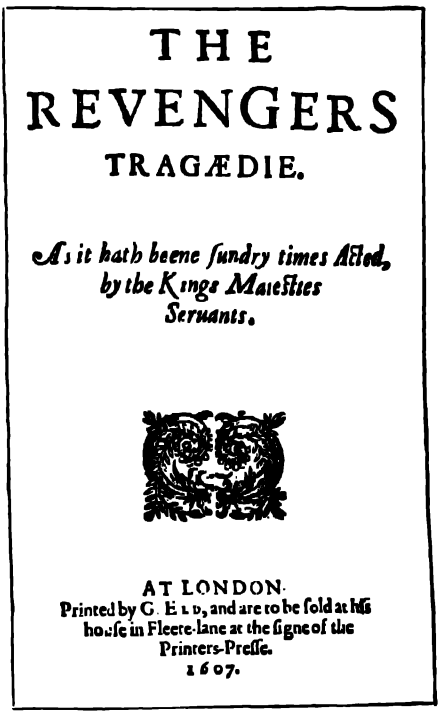
THE SCHOLAR AND HIS DOG, *from* "WHAT YOU WILL"

I was a scholar: seven useful springs
Did I deflower in quotations
Of cross'd opinions 'bout the soul of man;
The more I learnt, the more I learnt to doubt.
Delight, my spaniel, slept, whilst I baused (kissed) leaves,
Toss'd o'er the dunces, pored on the old print
Of titled words: and still my spaniel slept.
Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, baited my flesh,
Shrunk up my veins: and still my spaniel slept.
And still I held converse with Zabarell
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw
Of antique Donate: still my spaniel slept.
Still on went I; first, *an sit anima;*
Then, an it were mortal. O hold, hold; at that
They're at brain-buffets, fell by the ears amain
Pell-mell together: still my spaniel slept.
Then, whether 'twere corporeal, local, fix'd,
Ex traduce, but whether 't had free will
Or no, hot philosophers
Stood banding factions, all so strongly propp'd,
I stagger'd, knew not which was firmer part,
But thought, quoted, read, observed, and pryed,
Stuff'd noting-books: and still my spaniel slept.
At length he waked, and yawn'd; and by yon sky,
For aught I know he knew as much as I.

It is believed that **Cyril Tourneur** (1575?–1626) was the son of Richard Tourneur, Governor of the Brill in Holland. Much of his life was probably spent in service in the Netherlands. In 1600 was published his outrageously metaphysical and obscure poem, *The Transform'd Metamorphosis*. His earliest play, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, was printed in 1607, and *The Atheist's Tragedy* in 1611. A third, *The Nobleman*, was licensed in 1612, but has been lost. Cyril Tourneur acted as the secretary of Sir Edward Cecil in the Cadiz expedition of 1625, and was among those disbanded soldiers who were put ashore at Kinsale on the return of the fleet. He was already ill, and he died in Ireland, in utter destitution, on February 28, 1626.

From "THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY"

Here's an eye
Able to tempt a great man—to serve God;
A pretty hanging lip, that has forgot now to dissemble.
Methinks this mouth should make a swearer tremble;
A drunkard clasp his teeth, and not undo 'em,
To suffer wet damnation to run through 'em.
Here's a cheek keeps her colour let the wind go whistle;
Spout rain, we fear thee not: be hot or cold,
All's one with us: and is not he absurd,
Whose fortunes are upon their faces set,
That fear no other God but wind and wet?
Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
For thee? for thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships,
For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing? keep his horse and men,
To beat their valours for her?
Surely we're all mad people, and they
Whom we think are, are not.
Does every proud and self-affecting dame
Camphire her face for this? and grieve her Maker
In sinful baths of milk, when many an infant starves,
For her superfluous outside, for all this?
Who now bids twenty pound a night? prepares
Music, perfumes, and sweetmeats? all are hush'd.
Thou mayst lie chaste now! it were fine, methinks,
To have thee seen at revels, forgetful feasts,
And unclean brothels: sure 'twould fright the sinner,
And make him a good coward: put a reveller
Out of his antick amble,
And cloy an epicure with empty dishes.
Here might a scornful and ambitious woman
Look through and through herself.—See, ladies, with false forms
You deceive men, but cannot deceive worms.


THE
REVENGERS
TRAGÆDIE.

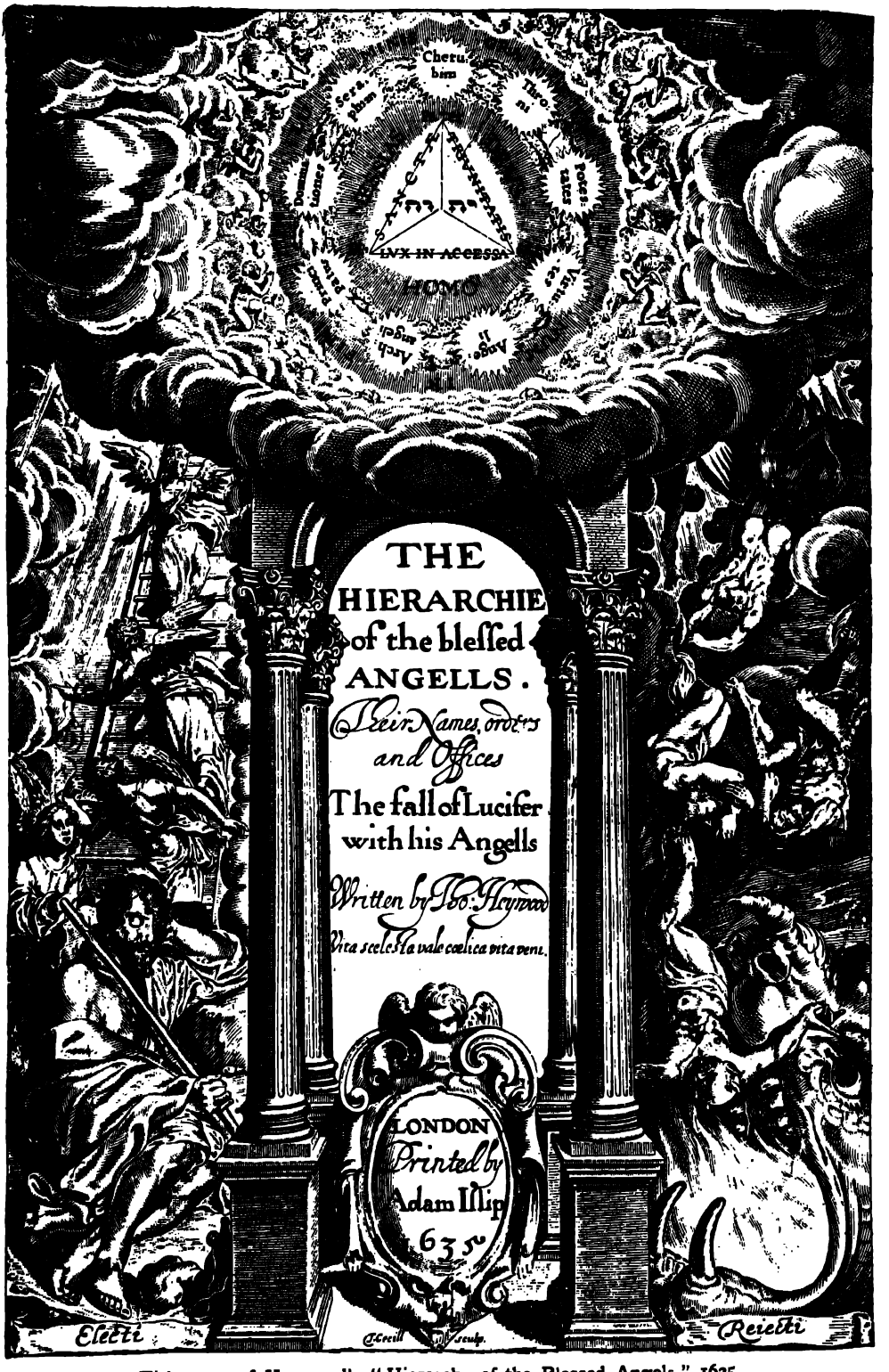
As it hath beene sundry times Acted, by the Kinge Maiesties Seruants.

AT LONDON
Printed by G. Eld, and are to be sold at his house in Fleete-lane at the signe of the Printers-Presse.
1607.

Title-page of Cyril Tourneur's "The Revenger's Tragedy," 1607

From "THE ATHEIST'S TRAGEDY"

Walking upon the fatal shore,
Among the slaughter'd bodies of their men,
Which the full-stomach'd sea had cast upon
The sands, it was my unhappy chance to light
Upon a face, whose favour when it lived
My astonish'd mind inform'd me I had seen.
He lay in his armour, as if that had been
His coffin; and the weeping sea (like one



Title-page of Heywood's "Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels," 1635

Whose milder temper doth lament the death
Of him whom in his rage he slew) runs up
The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheek ;
Goes back again, and forces up the sands
To bury him ; and every time it parts,
Sheds tears upon him ; till at last (as if
It could no longer endure to see the man
Whom it had slain, yet loath to leave him) with
A kind of unresolved unwilling pace,
Winding her waves one in another (like
A man that folds his arms, or wrings his hands,
For grief) ebb'd from the body, and descends ;
As if it would sink down into the earth,
And hide itself for shame of such a deed.



Allegorical plate from the "Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels," with portraits of Charles I. and his Family

The one fact about THOMAS HEYWOOD which is universally known is that Charles Lamb called him "a sort of prose Shakespeare." This genial expression, divorced from its context, has been a stumbling-block to many readers who have turned to *A Challenge for Beauty* or to *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, and have been disappointed to meet there with some beauty, indeed, but with slovenly qualities the reverse of Shakespearean. But Lamb's too-telling phrase should not be quoted alone ; it is true that he was carried away by the enthusiasm of the discoverer so far as to say that Heywood's "scenes are to the full as natural and affecting" as Shakespeare's ; yet he immediately qualified this excess of praise by adding, "but we miss *the Poet*, that which in Shakespeare always appears out of and above the surface of the nature. Heywood's characters, his country gentlemen, and so on, are exactly what we see, but of the best kind of what we see, in life." These words excellently indicate the tendency of this dramatist, whose merit lies not in the intensity and splendour of his fancy, or in his power over terror and pain, but in his

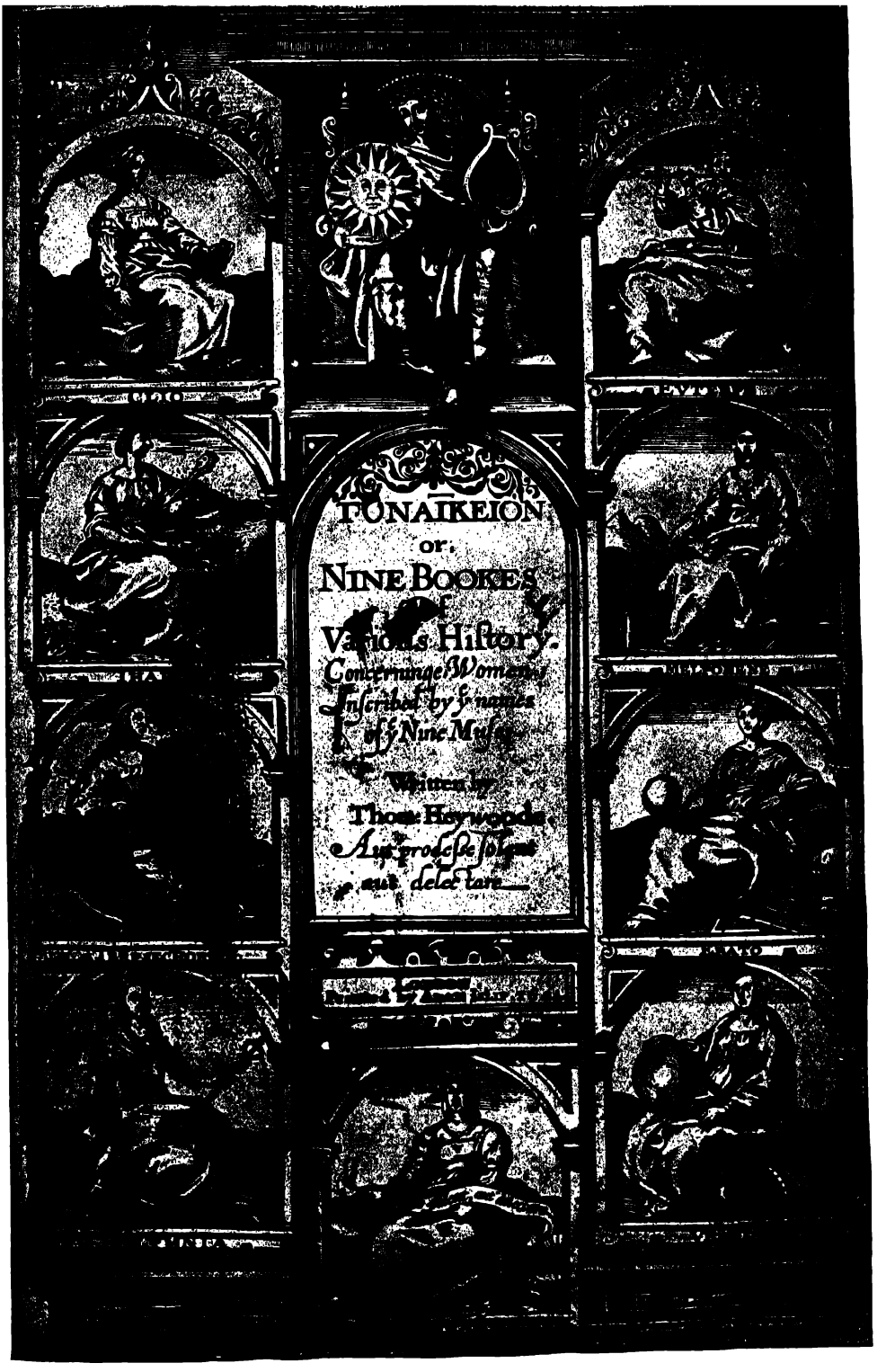
humane simplicity. Nowhere in the Jacobean age do we seem to come so close to the ordinary conversation of the day, unrevised and unadorned. What Heywood lacks is distinction; he is content to be an indefatigable hackney writer, incessantly and without ambition engaged in amusing and awakening his contemporaries. The people whom Heywood collects before us in such plays as *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *The English Traveller* are natural and, even in their errors, amiable. He does not deal in heroes and monsters, like so many of his fellow playwrights. In them a violence is notable, an uplifting of the whole soul in arms to resist fate and to perish, if necessary, in the struggle. But Heywood's gentle talent does not strive or cry; he loves to depict submission, reconciliations, facile intrigues which are "very delectable and full of mirth." Besides the domestic plays by which this poet is best known, he wrote a considerable number of classical entertainments, half serious dramas, half burlesques, ingenious and extraordinary, of which *The Rape of Lucrece* is the type, and a mass of pseudo-philosophical verse, garrulous and prosy, the most curious specimen of which is *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, a sort of analysis of the universe, visible and invisible.

It is probable that **Thomas Heywood** was born about 1575 in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Cambridge, and became a fellow of Peterhouse. During his residence at the University he became deeply interested in the stage, and doubtless contributed to the "tragedies, comedies, histories, pastorals, and shows" which he tells us were acted in his time by "graduates of good place." In 1596 he came to London and wrote a play for the Lord Admiral's Company, to which in 1598 we find him regularly attached as an actor. Of the dramas which he composed at this time, *The Four Prentices of London* is probably the only one which survives. We have, however, a series of tame chronicle-plays which seem to date from 1600. Heywood's masterpiece, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, was produced in 1602 (printed in 1607). In the very interesting preface to *The English Traveller*, which was not published until 1633, Heywood tells us that this tragi-comedy is but "one reserved amongst two hundred and twenty, in which I have had either an entire hand or at the least a main finger." Even at that date, many of these plays had "been negligently lost," and Heywood adds that "it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read." Of his vast body of dramatic writing, therefore, we may be surprised that so many as twenty-four complete plays have come down to us. Of his more ambitious, but less successful, non-dramatic works, *Troja Britannica* was published in 1609, *Gunaikeion, or, Nine Books Concerning Women* in 1624, and *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* in 1635. He disappears after 1641.

From "THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER"

(*A Carousal*)

Young Geraldine. This gentleman and I
Pass'd but just now by your next neighbour's house,
Where, as they say, dwells one young Lionel,
Wincott. An unthrift youth: his father now at sea.
Young Ger. . . . There this night



Title-page of Heywood's "Gunaikeion," 1624

Was a great feast. . . .
In the height of their carousing, all their brains
Warm'd with the heat of wine, discourse was offer'd
Of ships and storms at sea: when suddenly,
Out of his giddy wildness, one conceives
The room wherein they quaff'd to be a pinnace,
Moving and floating, and the confused noise
To be the murmuring winds, gusts, mariners;
That their unsteadfast footing did proceed
From rocking of the vessel: this conceived,
Each one begins to apprehend the danger,
And to look out for safety. Fly, saith one,
Up to the main top, and discover. He
Climbs by the bed-post to the tester, there
Reports a turbulent sea and tempest towards;
And wills them, if they'll save their ship and lives,
To cast their lading overboard. At this
All fall to work, and hoist into the street,
As to the sea, what next came to their hand,
Stools, tables, tressels, trenchers, bedsteads, cups,
Pots, plate, and glasses. Here a fellow whistles;
They take him for the boatswain: one lies struggling
Upon the floor, as if he swam for life:
A third takes the base-viol for the cock-boat,
Sits in the belly on 't, labours, and rows;
His oar, the stick with which the fiddler play'd;
A fourth bestrides his fellow, thinking to 'scape
(As did Arion) on the dolphin's back,
Still fumbling on a gittern.——The rude multitude,
Watching without, and gaping for the spoil
Cast from the windows, went by the ears about it;
The constable is called to atone the broil;
Which done, and hearing such a noise within
Of eminent shipwreck, enters the house, and finds them
In this confusion: they adore his staff,
And think it Neptune's trident; and that he
Comes with his Tritons (so they call'd his watch)
To calm the tempest and appease the waves:
And at this point we left them.

From "THE BRAZEN AGE" (1613)

(*Phœbus speaks*)

Sometimes I cast my eye upon the sea,
To see the tumbling seal or porpoise play.
There see I merchants trading, and their sails
Big-bellied with the wind; sea-fights sometimes
Rise with their smoke-thick clouds to dark my beams;
Sometimes I fix my face upon the earth,
With my warm fervour to give metals, trees,
Herbs, plants, and flowers, life. Here in gardens walk
Loose ladies with their lovers arm in arm.
Yonder the labouring ploughman drives his team.
Further I may behold main battles pitch'd;
And whom I favour most (by the wind's help)
I can assist with my transparent rays.
Here spy I cattle feeding; forests there
Stored with wild beasts; here shepherds with their lasses,

Piping beneath the trees while their flocks graze.
In cities I see trading, walking, bargaining,
Buying and selling, goodness, badness, all things—
And shine alike on all. . . .
No emperor walks forth, but I see his state ;
Nor sports, but I his pastimes can behold.
I see all coronations, funerals,
Marts, fairs, assemblies, pageants, sights and shows.
No hunting, but I better see the chase
Than they that rouse the game. What see not I ?
There's not a window, but my beams break in ;
No chink or cranny, but my rays pierce through ;
And there I see, O Vulcan, wondrous things :
Things that thyself, nor any god besides,
Would give belief to.

There is no body of writing in which the faults and the merits of the Jacobean age can be studied to more advantage than in the breathless and agitated plays of THOMAS MIDDLETON. Here all that is inconsistent, all qualities that are incompatible, are jumbled together in the strangest confusion. Here we have a brazen indelicacy married to an almost feminine susceptibility to natural and verbal beauty; Romance, in its most preposterous forms, running side by side with a plain domestic realism ; a capacity for the most thrilling revelations of the inmost secrets of the heart combined with an absence of all skill in portraiture, and the dullest acceptance of ethical caricature. It is impossible to find any general terms in which to describe the style and temper of Middleton, since what is true of one page is utterly false of the next. As a dramatist, pure and simple, however, this may be said that his extraordinary fluency and picturesqueness alternately support and betray him, so that the impression of life, of bustling and crowded vitality, which he hardly ever fails to produce, is now seductive and now wearying or even repulsive, according as the cleverness of the playwright wanes or waxes, that " indefatigable ingenuity " of which Mr. Swinburne so justly speaks being too often wasted upon obscure and ill-digested themes accepted too hastily by a rash and unbalanced judgment. At his best—in the character of De Flores in *The Changeling*, in the tragic pathos of *A Fair Quarrel*, in much of the graceful intrigue of *The Spanish Gipsy*—the poetic spirit of Middleton is prodigal in its manifestations. But the mention of these very noble dramas reminds us of another fact, which



Thomas Middleton
From the frontispiece to the " Two New Plays" of 1657

adds to our difficulty in exacting apprising or even analysing his genius. In all his best works we are left to conjecture what portions are really his, and what are due to the collaboration of a poet even more shadowy than himself, WILLIAM ROWLEY. These two are inextricably mingled, and what is further puzzling is that such plays as seem to be entirely written by the one or the other do not display such characteristics of individual style as greatly aid us in distinguishing them. But *A Game of Chess* is supposed to display the solitary Middleton and *A Match at Midnight* the unaided Rowley, and of these we may make what we can. Each of these dramatists combined, too, with Dekker, and the confusion of their styles is past all hope of unravelling. Middleton seems, however, to have been the more mellifluous versifier, the more conscious poet, of the two; and Rowley the more sturdy and more strenuous painter of character. Little, however, can be said with confidence, and Middleton and Rowley must be content to live together, inextricably intertwined, like Beaumont and Fletcher.



Title-page of Middleton's "Game at Chess," 1624

It has been supposed that **Thomas Middleton** (1570?–1627) was born in London; his father was a gentleman of that city. The poet was admitted a member of Gray's Inn in 1593, having already, as is believed, begun to write for the stage. His earliest surviving independent play is *Blurt, Master Constable*, printed in 1602. Middleton is the author, or part author, of about twenty-three plays which are still in existence, and we have no reason to suppose that we possess more than a fragment of the work which he poured forth with a careless volubility. Of the best known of his plays a list may here be given, with the dates of publication: *Michaelmas Term* (1607), *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608), *A Fair Quarrel* (1617), *The Changeling* (1653—acted 1624), *The Spanish Gipsy* (1653), *Woman Beware Women* (1657). In 1620 Middleton was appointed City Chronologer, and in 1623 was living at Newington Butts. In 1624 he produced a political and patriotic drama, *A Game of Chess*, which was successful beyond all precedent, but was so offensive to the Spanish Ambassador that he complained to King

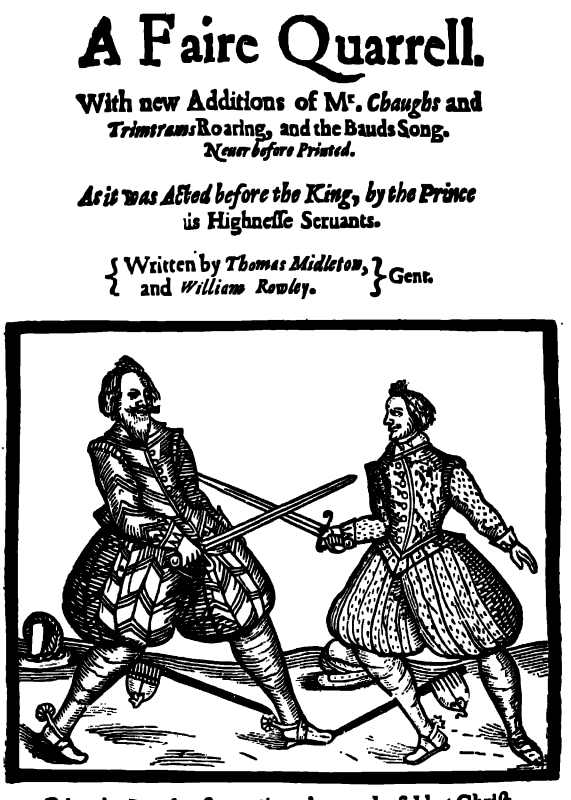
James, and poet and actors were sharply reprimanded and fined. Middleton died at Newington, wnere he was buried on July 4, 1627. Jonson called him " a base fellow," but it is not known what grounds he had for this charge. Another contemporary says, on the other hand :

Facetious Middleton, thy witty muse
Hath pleasèd all that books or men peruse ;
If any thee despise, he doth but show
Antipathy to wit in daring so ;
Thy fame's above his malice, and 'twill be
Dispraise enough for him to censure thee.

Of **William Rowley** scarcely a single personal fact is known, except that he was an actor in several companies from about 1607 to 1627. It has been conjectured that he lived on until 1642. The chief plays in which he was unassisted are *A New Wonder* (1632), *A Match at Midnight* (1633), and *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (1638).

From " BLURT, MASTER CONSTABLE "

Ah ! how can I sleep ? He, who truly loves,
Burns out the day in idle fantasies ;
And when the lamb bleating doth bid good-night
Unto the closing day, then tears begin
To keep quick time unto the owl, whose voice
Shrieks like the bellman in the lover's ears :
Love's eye the jewel of sleep, O ! seldom wears
The early lark is waken'd from her bed,
Being only by love's plaints disquieted ;
And singing in the morning's ear she weeps,
Being deep in love, at lovers' broken sleeps.
But say a golden slumber chance to tie
With silken strings the cover of love's eye ;
Then dreams, magician-like, mocking present
Pleasures, whose fading leaves more discontent.

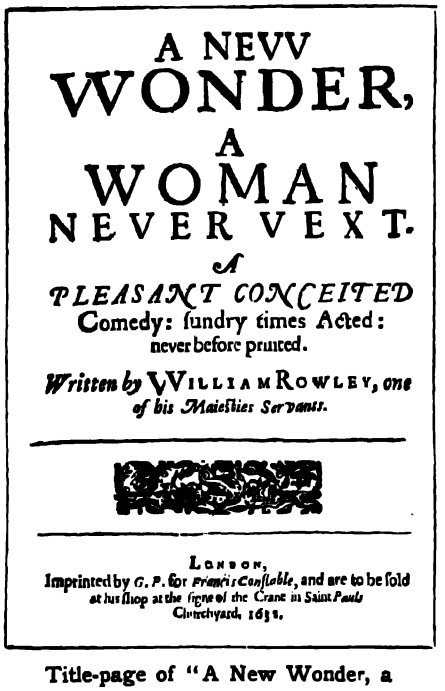


Title-page of Middleton and Rowley's " Fair Quarrel," 1617

THE PRELUDE TO THE DUEL *in* "A FAIR QUARREL"

Enter COLONEL *and his two Friends.*

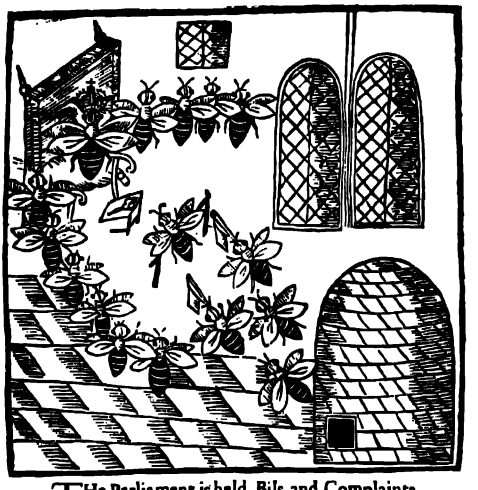
1*st Friend.* He's come; do you but draw: we'll fight it for you.
Captain. I know too much to grant that.
1*st Friend.* O dead manhood!
Had ever such a cause so faint a servant?
Shame brand me if I do not suffer for him.
Colonel. I've heard, sir, you've been guilty of much boasting
For your brave earliness at such a meeting.
You've lost the glory of that way this morning:
I was the first to-day.
Capt. So were you ever
In my respect, sir.


A NEVV
WONDER,
A
WOMAN
NEVER VEXT.
A
PLEASANT CONCEITED
Comedy: ſundry times Acted:
never before printed.
Written by WILLIAM ROWLEY, *one of his Maieſties Servants.*
LONDON,
Imprinted by *G. P.* for *Francis Conſtable*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop at the ſigne of the Crane in Saint *Pauls* Churchyard. 1632.

Title-page of "A New Wonder, a Woman Never Vexed," 1632

1*st Friend.* O most base præludium
Capt. I never thought on victory our mistress
With greater reverence than I have your worth,
Nor ever loved her better.
Success in you has been my absolute joy,
And when I've wish'd content I've wish'd your friendship.
Col. I came not hither, sir, for an encomium.
I came provided
For storms and tempests, and the foulest season
That ever rage let forth, or blew in wildness,
From the incensed prison of man's blood.
Capt. 'Tis otherwise with me: I come with mildness,
Peace, constant amity, and calm forgiveness,
The weather of a Christian and a friend.
1*st Friend.* Give me a valiant Turk, though not worth tenpence.
Capt. Yet, sir, the world will judge the injury mine,
Insufferable mine, mine beyond injury.
Thousands have made a less wrong reach to hell,
Ay and rejoiced in his most endless vengeance
(A miserable triumph though a just one)
But when I call to memory our long friendship,
Methinks it cannot be too great a wrong
That then I should not pardon. Why shou.. man
For a poor hasty syllable or two
(And vented only in forgetful fury)
Chain all the hopes and riches of his soul
To the revenge of that? die lost for ever?
For he that makes his last peace with his Maker
In anger, anger is his peace eternally:
He must expect the same return again,
Whose venture is deceitful. Must he not, sir?
Col. I see what I must do, fairly put up again,
For here 'll be nothing done, I perceive that.
Capt. What shall be done in such a worthless business

But to be sorry and to be forgiven ?
You, sir, to bring repentance ; and I pardon.
Col. I bring repentance, sir ?
Capt. If't be too much
To say, repentance ; call it what you please, sir,
Choose your own word ; I know you're sorry for it
And that's as good.
Col. I sorry ? by fame's honour, I am wrong'd :
Do you seek for peace and draw the quarrel larger ?
Capt. Then 'tis I'm sorry that I thought you so.
1st Friend. A captain ! I could gnaw his title off.
Capt. Nor is it any misbecoming virtue, sir,
In the best manliness, to repent a wrong :
Which made me bold with you.
1st Friend. I could cuff his head off.
2nd Friend. Nay, pish.
Col. So once again take thou thy peaceful rest then ; [*To his sword.*
But as I put thee up, I must proclaim
This captain here, both to his friends and mine,
That only came to see fair valour righted,
A base submissive coward : so I leave him.
Capt. O, Heaven has pitied my excessive patience,
And sent me a cause : now I have a cause :
A coward I was never.—Come you back, sir.



THe Parliament is held, Bils and Complaints
Heard and reform'd, with ſeverall reſtraints
Of uſurpt freedome ; inſtituted Law
To keepe the Common Wealth of Bees in awe

Woodcut illustration from John Day's "Parliament of Bees," 1641

Of many of the Jacobean dramatists so large a portion of their work is lost that we run the risk of misjudging what was the general character of that work. We are apt to take for granted that a remarkable specimen which has survived is typical of what its author wrote, when, perhaps, if we knew more, we should see that it was entirely exceptional. This is perhaps the case with JOHN DAY, who was a very prolific dramatist, of whose innumerable pieces only six survive. Of these, the rhymed masque of *The Parliament of Bees* is so predominant in charm, that we have come to think of Day as a writer standing alone in the loud Jacobean market-place, presenting none but delicate and fantastic wares of exquisite lyrical workmanship. But Day's other dramas, although not one is without evidence of a sweetness and amenity of disposition peculiar to this author, are not strikingly dissimilar from those of others, as in particular of Fletcher, whom Day imitated in his intrigue, and of Dekker. At a somewhat later date, THOMAS NABBES produced a moral masque of *Microcosmus*, which stands out among his gentle and somewhat ineffectual writings in a prominent way. It is well to observe

that the true Elizabethan sweetness of fancy, a perfume of the Heliconian honey, still lingered about English drama long after the elements of the playhouse had become realistic and mundane; there was still something of childhood about stage-poetry, although it had grown so adult and rough.

It is possible that **John Day** was born about 1575; he was educated, from 1592 onwards, at Caius College, Cambridge. The earliest record of his theatrical career which has come down to us is an entry in Henslowe's *Diary* of 1599, showing that he was then already an actor-playwright. All his early plays are lost, except *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* (1600). His *Parliament of Bees* was acted, and perhaps printed, in 1607, but the earliest edition extant is of 1641. Of his ordinary plays, the most lively is *The Isle of Gulls*, printed in 1606. Day died in or about the year 1640. **Thomas Nabbes** is thought to have been born at Worcester. His comedy of *Covent Garden* was acted in 1632. The most graceful of Nabbes' writings, his *Microcosmus*, appeared in 1637, and another masque, *The Spring's Glory*, in 1638, after which date Nabbes disappears.

From "THE PARLIAMENT OF BEES"

Oberon. A female bee! thy character?
Flora. Flora, Oberon's gardener,
Huswife both of herbs and flowers,
To strew thy shrine, and trim thy bowers,
With violets, roses, eglantine,
Daffadown, and blue columbine,
Hath forth the bosom of the spring
Pluck'd this nosegay, which I bring
From Eleusis (mine own shrine)
To thee, a monarch all divine;
And, as true impost of my grove,
Present it to great Oberon's love,
Oberon. Honey-dews refresh thy meads;
Cowslips spring with golden heads·
July-flowers and carnations wear
Leaves double-streak'd, with maiden-hair;
May thy lilies taller grow,
Thy violets fuller sweetness owe;
And last of all, may Phœbus love
To kiss thee; and frequent thy grove,
As thou in service true shalt be
Unto our crown and royalty.

When we reach the work of PHILIP MASSINGER, we are already conscious that English drama has begun to hasten upon its downward course. What the glorious example of Shakespeare could not give it, it failed to receive from the learning and enthusiasm of Jonson, and after this point almost every accident was damaging. One blow after another weakened and distracted it; almost year by year, and with a sinister rapidity, it sank into desuetude. The retirement of Shakespeare and the death of Beaumont placed tragedy and romantic comedy mainly in the lax hands of Fletcher, who for some eight years more poured forth his magnanimous and sunshiny plays, so musical, so dissolute, so fantastic. Then to the wearied Fletcher is added the young, skilful and earnest talent of Massinger, who, about 1624,

is found taking his place as the most active and popular dramatic poet of the hour. As the flood of unequal, hurried plays by the minor survivors of an earlier generation begins to slacken, Massinger for a while practically holds the field. In many respects his talent was an admirable one, and the criticism which treats Massinger with contempt is led astray by comparing him at disadvantageous points with his most brilliant predecessors.

It is, however, impossible to study Massinger without ejaculating "The glory is departing." He writes with vigour, but he never attains to the impetus of Fletcher; his versification is tamer than any which we have yet met with since the great revival; his construction is prosier, without gaining coherency. One signal merit of Massinger is his serious and solid conception of duty and responsibility, but we have, in exchange for his moral gravity, to resign ourselves to the loss of all fire and colour. It is not to the sober author of *The Bondman* and *The City Madam* that we come for the tumultuous ecstasy which carried Webster and Middleton on its wings. But we must not seek for intensity or passion in Massinger's pages. He was essentially a writer for the public stage and for large popular audiences. His aim seems to have been to win these last back to the theatre by abandoning the over-lyrical and over-fantastic elements which the poets had introduced. Massinger knew that it is not by extravagant and obscure appeals to the imagination that the idle public is to be amused after its dinner. He sat down to produce prosaic, decorous, interesting pieces—tragedies not remarkable for stateliness, comedies from which humour is almost absent—which should possess decorum of movement, variety of interest, and that "equability of all the passions" which the public mind was beginning to crave after the violence of those appeals which two generations of poets had made upon it in their ecstasy.

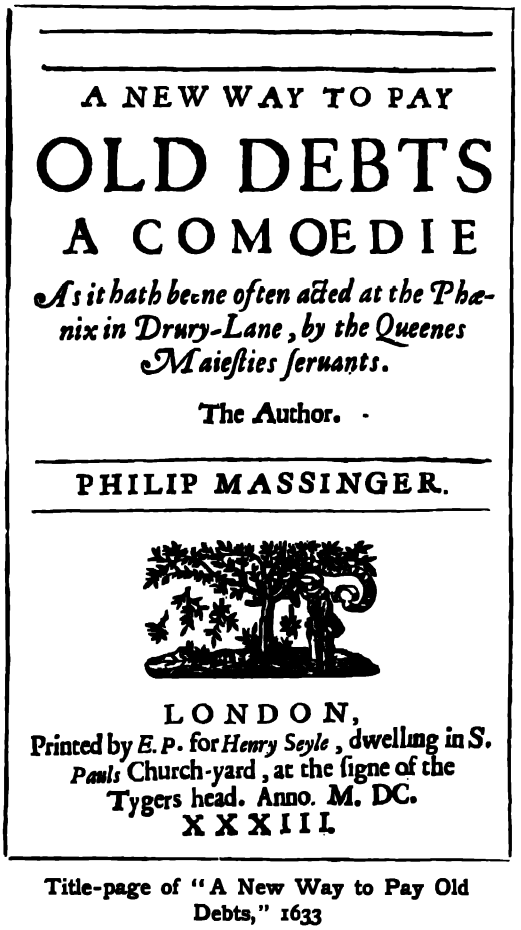


Philip Massinger

After the frontispiece to his plays

In Massinger there existed an element which has become inappreciable to us, but which greatly added to his power and popularity in his own time.

This was the courage with which he adapted his art to the illustration of current political and social events. To us *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is merely a very well-constructed comedy; to Massinger's contemporaries it was a solemn, almost a religious satire on those monopolists who, like the execrated Sir Giles Mompessen, were the scourge of the poor and of the middle classes. In *The Great Duke of Florence* we read an agreeable and genial tragi-comedy; to Massinger's audience it was a comment, playful and bold, on that stirring event of the hour, Buckingham's expedition to the island of Rhé. A lost play, *The King and the Subject*, contained a criticism of ship-money so direct that it brought down upon the playwright the sovereign's displeasure; "this is too insolent," said Charles I., "and must be changed." The ideals of political and personal virtue in the mind of Massinger were very high. Unfortunately, as his portrait testifies, there was an element of weakness in him, and he stooped to the low tastes of the vulgar minds whom it was his business to amuse. As Gardiner has acutely noted, "in vain he sought to still the remonstrances of his conscience by arguing that the mere representation of evil conveyed a reproof." This was not the spirit in which the real opponents of public indelicacy, such as Prynne, in that "scourge of stage-players," his snarling *Histriomastix* of 1632, found it effective to appeal to the scared consciences of English pleasure-seekers.


A NEW WAY TO PAY

OLD DEBTS

A COMOEDIE

As it hath beene often acted at the Phœnix in Drury-Lane, by the Queenes Maieſties ſeruants.

The Author.

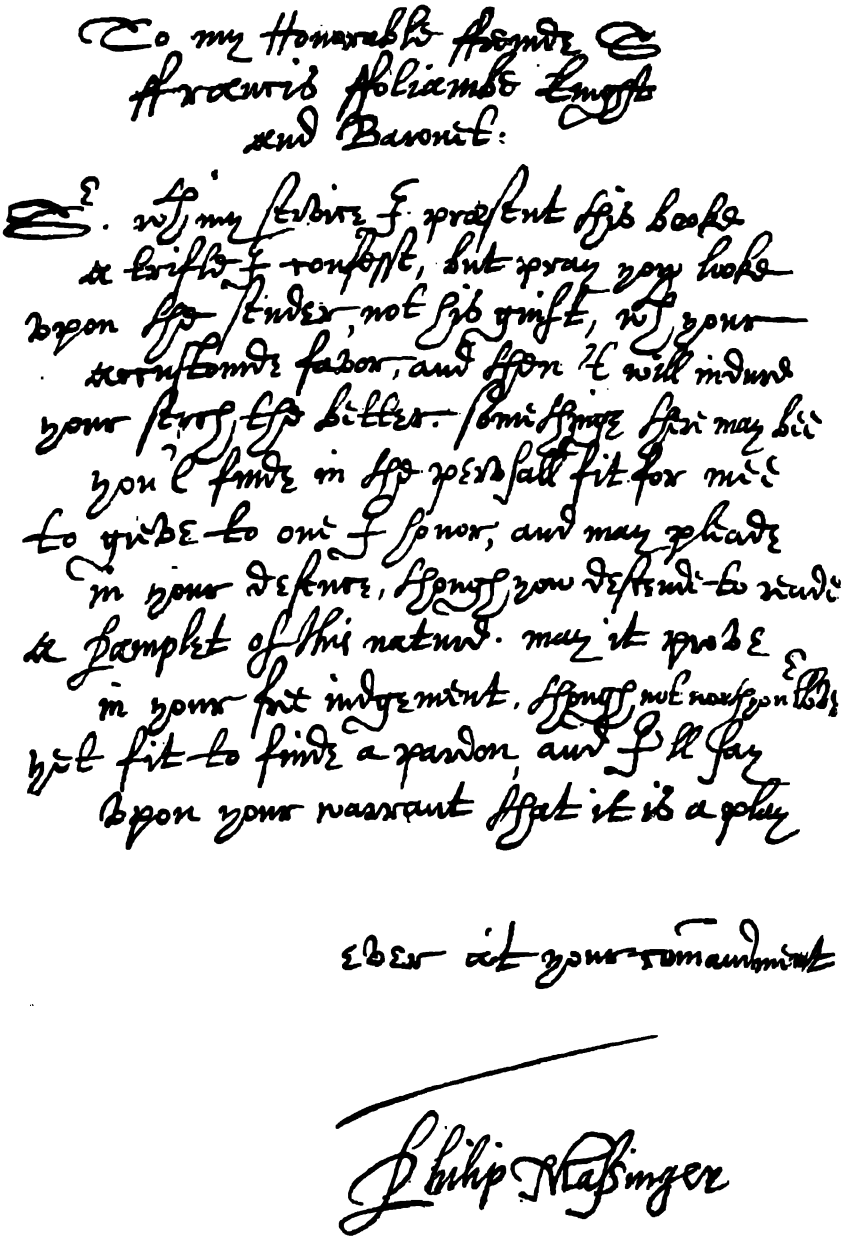
PHILIP MASSINGER.

LONDON,
Printed by *E. P.* for *Henry Seyle*, dwelling in S. *Pauls* Church-yard, at the ſigne of the Tygers head. Anno. M. DC. XXXIII.

Title-page of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," 1633

Less than the customary uncertainty hangs over the career of **Philip Massinger** (1583–1638). He was the son of Arthur Massinger, a gentleman who "happily spent many years, and died" in the service of the Earls of Pembroke. The poet was born at Salisbury, where he was baptized on November 24, 1583. There is an impression that he was page to the Countess; but on May 14, 1602, he was entered as a commoner of St. Alban Hall, Oxford. The Earl of Pembroke paid his college expenses during the four years he was at the University, and was displeased to find that he "gave his mind more to poetry and romances than to

logic and philosophy, which he ought to have done." In 1606 he came up to London, and "betook himself to writing plays," but we are left very much in



Facsimile Letter from Massinger to Sir Francis Foljambe

the dark as to the exact nature of his lost productions during the first fifteen years of his authorship. *A Very Woman*, however, we know to have been acted at Court in 1621. Of the very fine play called *The Virgin Martyr*, the greater

part is probably Dekker's, but *The Duke of Milan* (1623) is certainly entirely the work of Massinger. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* must have been acted about the same time, though it was not printed until 1632. During the last years of James I., Massinger produced four of his strongest dramas: *The Bondman, The Renegado, The Parliament of Love,* and *The Great Duke of Florence.* He himself believed *The Roman Actor* to be "the most perfect birth of my Minerva." On the morning of March 17, 1638, Massinger, who had apparently been perfectly well the night before, was found dead in his bed in his house in Bankside: he was buried next day, as "a stranger," in the church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, in a grave which already contained the bones of his friend and master, Fletcher.

From "THE CITY MADAM"

Luke. 'Twas no fantastic object, but a truth;
A real truth, no dream. I did not slumber;
And could wake ever with a brooding eye
To gaze upon it! it did endure the touch;
I saw, and felt it. Yet what I beheld
And handled oft, did so transcend belief
(My wonder and astonishment pass'd o'er)
I faintly could give credit to my senses.
Thou dumb magician, that without a charm [*To the key.*
Didst make my entrance easy, to possess
What wise men wish and toil for! Hermes' moly;
Sibylla's golden bough; the great elixir,
Imagined only by the alchymist,
Compared with thee, are shadows; thou the substance
And guardian of felicity. No marvel,
My brother made thy place of rest his bosom,
Thou being the keeper of his heart, a mistress
To be hugg'd ever. In by-corners of
This sacred room, silver, in bags heap'd up,
Like billets saw'd and ready for the fire,
Unworthy to hold fellowship with bright gold,
That flow'd about the room, conceal'd itself.
There needs no artificial light; the splendour
Makes a perpetual day there, night and darkness
By that still-burning lamp for ever banish'd.
But when, guided by that, my eyes had made
Discovery of the caskets, and they open'd,
Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth
A pyramid of flames, and in the roof
Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place
Heaven's abstract, or epitome: rubies, sapphires,
And ropes of orient pearl, these seen, I could not
But look on gold with contempt: and yet I found
What weak credulity could have no faith in,
A treasure far exceeding these. Here lay
A manor bound fast in a skin of parchment;
The wax continuing hard, the acres melting:
Here a sure deed of gift for a market town,
If not redeem'd this day; which is not in
The unthrift's power; there being scarce one shire
In Wales or England, where my moneys are not
Lent out at usury, the certain hook
To draw in more.

From "A New Way to Pay Old Debts"

Lord Lovell. Are you not frighted with the imprecations
And curses of whole families, made wretched
By your sinister practices?
Sir Giles Overreach. Yes, as rocks are
When foamy billows split themselves against
Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is moved,
When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.
I am of a solid temper, and, like these,
Steer on a constant course: with mine own sword,
If call'd into the field, I can make that right,
Which fearful enemies murmur'd at as wrong.
Now, for those other piddling complaints,
Breathed out in bitterness; as, when they call me
Extortioner, tyrant, cormorant, or intruder
On my poor neighbour's right, or grand encloser
Of what was common to my private use;
Nay, when my ears are pierced with widows' cries,
And undone orphans wash with tears my threshold;
I only think what 'tis to have my daughter
Right honourable; and 'tis a powerful charm,
Makes me insensible of remorse or pity,
Or the least sting of conscience.
Lovell. I admire
The toughness of your nature.
Sir Giles. 'Tis for you,
My lord, and for my daughter, I am marble.

One of the most accomplished of the later generation of actor-dramatists, **Nathaniel Field** (1587–1633), who was born in London in October 1587, was the son of a Puritan preacher who died early in 1588, and a younger brother of Theophilus Field, afterwards Bishop of Hereford. At the age of twelve he was made one of the Children of the Queen's Chapel, and he created the principal *rôles* in several of Ben Jonson's plays. He was considered, after the death of Burbage, the best actor of his day. Field wrote two very clever comedies—*A Woman a Weathercock*, published in 1612, and *Amends for Ladies* (1618); he also collaborated with Massinger in *The Fatal Dowry* (1632). He was unhappily married, and very jealous; this doubtless accounts for the excessive severity with which women are treated in his plays. Field died on February 20, 1633, and was buried at Blackfriars.

From "The Fatal Dowry"

Charalois. How like a silent stream shaded with night,
And gliding softly with our windy sighs,
Moves the whole frame of this solemnity!
Tears, sighs, and blacks, filling the simile;
Whilst I, the only murmur in this grove
Of death, thus hollowly break forth!—Vouchsafe
To stay awhile. Rest, rest in peace, dear earth!
Thou that broughtst rest to their unthankful lives,
Whose cruelty denied thee rest in death!
Here stands thy poor executor, thy son,
That makes his life prisoner to bail thy death;
Who gladlier puts on this captivity,
Than virgins, long in love, their wedding weeds,
Of all that ever thou hast done good to,

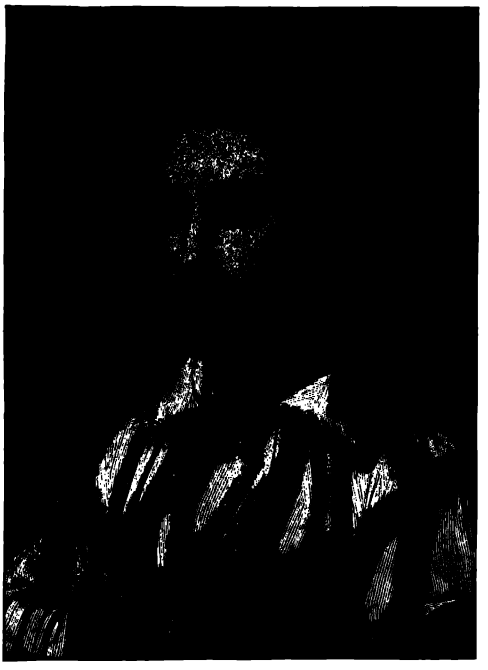
These only have good memories ; for they
Remember best, forget not gratitude.
I thank you for this last and friendly love.
And though this country, like a viperous mother,
Not only hath eat up ungratefully
All means of thee, her son, but last thyself,
Leaving thy heir so bare and indigent,
He cannot raise thee a poor monument,
Such as a flatterer or an usurer hath ;
Thy worth in every honest breast builds one,
Making their friendly hearts thy funeral stone.

Pontalier. Sir !

Charalois. Peace ! O peace ! This scene is wholly mine—
What ! weep you, soldiers ?—blanch not.
—Romont weeps.—
Ha ! let me see ! my miracle is eased ;
The jailers and the creditors do weep ;
Ev'n they that make us weep, do weep themselves.
Be these thy body's balm ; these and thy virtue
Keep thy fame ever odoriferous,
Whilst the great, proud, rich, undeserving man,
Alive stinks in his vices, and, being vanish'd,
The golden calf that was an idol, deck'd
With marble pillars, jet and porphyry,
Shall quickly both in bone and name consume,
Though wrapp'd in lead, spice, cere-cloth, and perfume.

Creditor. Sir !

Charalois. What !—away for shame,
—you, profane rogues,
Must not be mingled with these holy relics :
This is a sacrifice—our shower shall crown
His sepulchre with olive, myrrh, and bays,
The plants of peace, of sorrow, victory :
Your tears would spring but weeds.

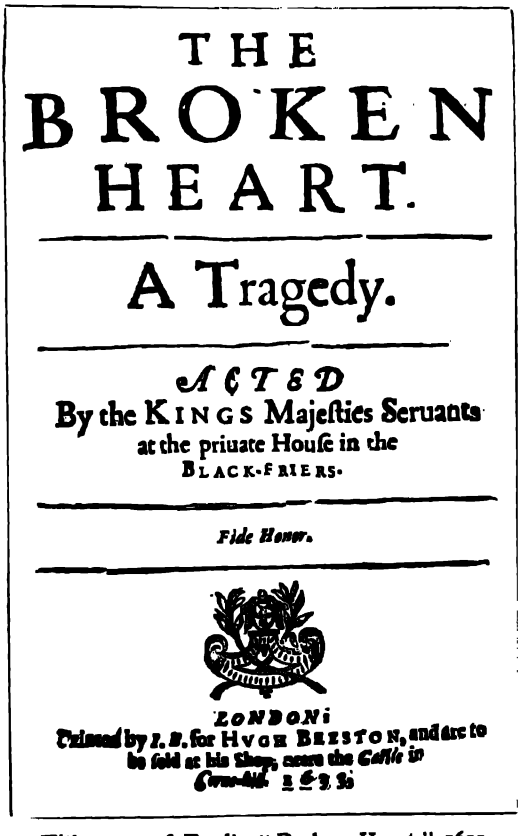


Nathaniel Field
After the portrait at Dulwich

The quenching of the dramatic fire was now rapid and final, but in a brief blaze of the sinking embers we encounter JOHN FORD, perhaps as genuine a tragic poet as any of his forerunners, Shakespeare alone excepted. In his best plays we revert for a moment to the old magnificence of diction, the haughty disregard of convention, the contempt for ethical restrictions. What we do not return to is the brocaded richness of the Elizabethan age. Ford is austere and somewhat hard ; he has intensity and passion which sustain him at a level flight of strong and vivid poetry, but he wastes no time on ornament ; he rarely turns aside to mould a metaphor or set a quip on the plain marble of his edifice. He loves what is sombre and fatal ; he is, with the one exception of Webster, the most intellectual of the Jacobean playwrights, and his intrigues are built up on a study of moral problems. It has been pointed out

on more than one occasion, by the present writer, that in his first writings, and in particular in *The Broken Heart*, Ford reminds us less of the English school in its more coloured and glowing characteristics than of other dramatic literatures—that of Greece in the past, that of France in the immediate future.

What distinguishes Ford, then, from all other English dramatists is a severity, we may almost say a rigidity, which isolates him from Fletcher but draws him nearer to Corneille and Retrou. The tendency of the decadent English playwrights was more and more to confuse the art of the stage with the art of romance. It is interesting to perceive that Ford saw the dangers into which his elder compeers had fallen, and that he set himself to avoid some of their worst faults. He is not affected, as were so many of the comic writers; he is not bombastic, with almost all the tragedians. He has a certain grandeur of simplicity, an amplitude of design, both of them marred by an unfortunate monotony of voice. It is only in the one surviving play of his youth, *The Lover's Melancholy*, that Ford indulges in romance and melody. In his great tragedies, especially in *The Broken Heart*, his preservation of the unities, his serried action, his observance of the point of honour, his rapid and ingenious evolution, he is by far the most "classic" of our early dramatists.


THE
BROKEN
HEART.

A Tragedy.

ACTED
By the KINGS Majeſties Seruants
at the priuate Houſe in the
BLACK-FRIERS.

Fide Honor.

LONDON:
Printed by I. B. for HVGH BRISTON, and are to
be ſold at his Shop, neere the *Caſtle* in
Corne-hill. 1633

Title-page of Ford's "Broken Heart," 1633

Unfortunately Ford had a mania for dark and hideous ethical problems, and he liked the subjects of his plays to be morally improbable. His imagination was daring, and it sought for freshness of idea in forbidden places. He was interested in the history of those things which, as Sir Thomas Browne thought, should not remain on "any register but that of hell." It is therefore in *The Broken Heart*, where his action is not deformed by any pursuit of the impossible, that the essential sublimity of Ford's mind can be studied to the best advantage. This is the only drama of his which has been seen on the modern stage, where its high theatrical qualities have proved that Ford is one of those genuine dramatists who are read, indeed, with enjoyment in the study, but whose genuine appeal should be to the terror and pity of an audience in the theatre.

John Ford (1586–1656 ?) was the second son of Thomas Ford, of Ilsington, in Devonshire, where the poet was baptized on April 17, 1586. It is believed that he matriculated, before he was fifteen, at Exeter College, Oxford, but his University life was very brief, and he was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1602. In 1606 he published two poems, entitled *Fame's Memorial* and *Honor Triumphant*. It is probable that Ford early began to write for the stage, in collaboration with Dekker, Webster, and others of his seniors. Of his early essays in this kind we possess the masque of *The Sun's Darling*, and the chronicle of *The Witch of Edmonton*, in which Ford had some share. The first play, written wholly by Ford, which we now possess is *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629). In the prologue to *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, printed in 1633, the author speaks of this play as "the firstfruits of his leisure"; he printed *The Broken Heart* and *Love's Sacrifice* in the same year, and it is natural to suppose that some event had at this time enriched him, and by enabling him to desist from his labours had turned his attention to the preservation of his writings. His historical drama of *Perkin Warbeck* belongs to the next year, 1634, and *Fancies Chaste and Noble* to 1638. His last play, *The Lady's Trial*, was published in 1639. It is believed that in that year Ford married, and retired to his paternal home, the manor-house at Ilsington, where he was born. He is said to have had children, and to have died in his Devonshire retreat towards the middle of the century.

From "THE LOVER'S MELANCHOLY"

(*Contention of a Bird and a Musician*)

Passing from Italy to Greece, the tales
Which poets of an elder time have feign'd
To glorify their Tempe, bred in me
Desire of visiting that paradise.
To Thessaly I came, and living private,
Without acquaintance of more sweet companions
Than the old inmates to my love, my thoughts,
I day by day frequented silent groves
And solitary walks. One morning early
This accident encounter'd me: I heard
The sweetest and most ravishing contention
That art or nature ever were at strife in. . . .
A sound of music touch'd mine ears, or rather
Indeed entranced my soul: as I stole nearer,
Invited by the melody, I saw
This youth, this fair-faced youth, upon his lute
With strains of strange variety and harmony
Proclaiming (as it seem'd) so bold a challenge
To the clear quiristers of the woods, the birds,
That as they flock'd about him, all stood silent,
Wondering at what they heard. I wonder'd too.
. . . A nightingale,
Nature's best skill'd musician, undertakes
The challenge; and, for every several strain
The well-shaped youth could touch, she sung her own;
He could not run division with more art
Upon his quaking instrument, than she
The nightingale did with her various notes
Reply to. . . .
Some time thus spent, the young man grew at last

Into a pretty anger ; that a bird,
Whom art had never taught cliffs, moods, or notes,
Should vie with him for mastery, whose study
Had busied many hours to perfect practice :
To end the controversy, in a rapture
Upon his instrument he plays so swiftly,
So many voluntaries, and so quick,
That there was curiosity and cunning,
Concord in discord, lines of differing method
Meeting in one full centre of delight.
. . . The bird (ordain'd to be
Music's first martyr) strove to imitate
These several sounds : which when her warbling throat
Fail'd in, for grief down dropt she on his lute
And brake her heart. It was the quaintest sadness,
To see the conqueror upon her hearse
To weep a funeral elegy of tears. . . .
He looks upon the trophies of his art,
Then sigh'd, then wiped his eyes, then sigh'd, and cried
" Alas ! poor creature, I will soon revenge
This cruelty upon the author of it.
Henceforth this lute, guilty of innocent blood,
Shall never more betray a harmless peace
To an untimely end " : and in that sorrow,
As he was pashing it against a tree,
I suddenly stept in.

At the very close of the great school which had opened with Kyd and Lyly, a placid and elegant talent made its appearance, recurring without vehemence or thrill to the purely ornamental tradition of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and continuing, with a mild monotony, to repeat the commonplaces of the drama until they were hopelessly out of fashion. In the age in which JAMES SHIRLEY lived, his style was recognised as being " sweet-tempered," " discreet " and " sober," and his merits, although they are genuine, are rather of the negative order. His tragedies awaken pity more than horror ; he does not strive to freeze the blood in our veins by scenes which are disfigured with the grimace of torture nor to drive us mad by suspending us over the abysses of fear. He avoids over-emphasis, as much from exhaustion as from good taste. He professes to show us " a dead man's skull beneath the roots of flowers," that is to say, to indicate his strong situations in words which are embroidered with poetic fancy. The comedies of Shirley are polite and merry, rarely gross ; his scenic genius is persistent, but mild and apathetic. The very large body of his work, which seldom sinks below a respectable poetic level, suggests a certain degeneracy in its plenitude ; if Shirley had been richer in intellectual resource he could not have consented to proceed with so placid a uniformity. He would have been worse, that he might become better. If we allow that the great school closes with him, however, we must admit that it closes respectably. Shirley had a good notion of how to construct a play ; he was a competent craftsman ; his attitude to his art was noble ; and as a lyrical poet he had much dignity and sweetness. It was his chronological ill-fortune that he was born to illustrate a dying phase of literature.

James Shirley (1596–1666) was born on September 13, 1596, in the parish of St. Mary Woolchurch, in London. In 1608 he entered Merchant Taylors' School, where he did well, and remained for nearly four years. Thence he proceeded to St. John's College, Oxford, where he soon attracted the notice of Laud, then President of St. John's. His wish was to study for holy orders, but this Laud forbade him to do, because he was disfigured by a large mole on his left cheek. Perhaps from annoyance at this exclusion, Shirley betook himself for "some precious years" to St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge. Here in 1618 he published *Echo; or, The Unfortunate Lovers*, of which edition no copy has come down to us; it is conjectured, however, to be mainly identical with the romantic poem of *Narcissus*, which Shirley printed in 1646. He seems to have remained at Cambridge until 1623, when he was appointed Master of St. Albans Grammar School. In the meantime, in spite of Laud and the wen, he had taken orders in the English Church, accepted a living in or near St. Albans, and resigned it on joining the Church of Rome. He greatly disliked being a schoolmaster, and seems to have quitted St. Albans on the success of his earliest play, *The School of Compliment* (*Love Tricks*), in 1625. He soon took a place among the dramatists of his day which was rivalled only by Massinger. In 1631 he went to reside in Dublin, and wrote while he was there at least twelve plays, including that admirable comedy, *The Lady of Pleasure*. In 1633 his comedy of *The Young Admiral* received public and official commendation for its "beneficial and cleanly way of poetry"; Shirley was offered by the Master of the Revels as "a pattern to other poets," and *The Gamester*, when it was acted in the same year, was pronounced by the King "the best play he had seen for seven years." Shirley came back to England in 1635, but after a few months in London returned

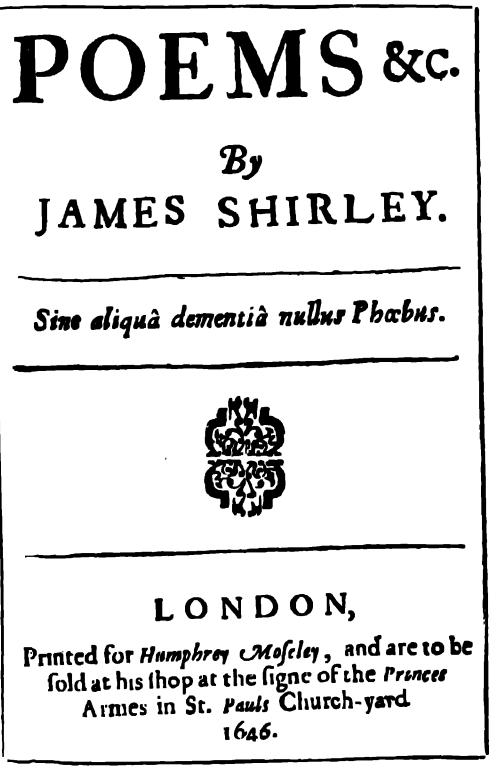


James Shirley
From a portrait in the 1646 edition of his "Poems"

to Ireland, where he stayed for two years. When the Rebellion broke out, Shirley was forced to leave London, but was protected by the Duke (then Earl) of Newcastle, and afterwards by the poet Thomas Stanley. He returned to London after the Restoration, but his second wife and he were driven out of their house near Fleet Street by the great fire of London. They both died of terror and exposure on the same day, in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where they were buried in one grave on October 29, 1666.

From "THE SCHOOL OF COMPLIMENT"

Infortunio. I must have other answer, for I love you.
Selina. Must! but I don't see any necessity that
I must love you. I do confess you are
A proper man.
Inf. O, do not mock, Selina; let not excellence,
Which you are full of, make you proud and scornful.
I am a gentleman; though my outward part
Cannot attract affection, yet some have told me,
Nature hath made me what she need not shame.
Yet look into my heart; there you shall see
What you cannot despise, for there you are
With all your graces waiting on you; there
Love hath made you a throne to sit, and rule
O'er Infortunio; all my thoughts obeying,
And honouring you as queen. Pass by my outside,
My breast I dare compare with any man.


POEMS &c.

By

JAMES SHIRLEY.

Sine aliquâ dementiâ nullus Phœbus.

LONDON,

Printed for *Humphrey Moſeley*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop at the ſigne of the *Princes* Armes in St. *Pauls* Church-yard 1646.

Title-page of Shirley's collected "Poems," 1646

Sel. But who can see this breast you boast of so?
Inf. O, 'tis an easy work; for though it be
Not to be pierced by the dull eye, whose beam
Is spent on outward shapes, there is a way
To make a search into its hiddenest passage.
I know you would not love, to please your sense.
A tree, that bears a ragged unleaved top
In depth of winter, may when summer comes
Speak by his fruit he is not dead but youthful,
Though once he show'd no sap: my heart's a plant
Kept down by colder thoughts and doubtful fears.
Your frowns like winter storms make it seem dead,
But yet it is not so; make it but yours,
And you shall see it spring, and shoot forth leaves
Worthy your eye, and the oppressed sap

Ascend to every part to make it green,
And pay your love with fruit when harvest comes.
Sel. Then you confess your love is cold as yet,
And winter's in your heart.
Inf. Mistake me not, Selina, for I say
My heart is cold, not love.
Sel. And yet your love is from your heart, I'll warrant.
Inf. O, you are nimble to mistake.
My heart is cold in your displeasures only,
And yet my love is fervent; for your eye,
Casting out beams, maintains the flame it burns in.
Again, sweet love,
My heart is not mine own, 'tis yours, you have it.

CALCHAS' HYMN AT THE FUNERAL OF AJAX, *from* "THE CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ULYSSES"

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still.
Early or late,
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
While they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds.
Upon Death's purple altar now,
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb.
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

From "THE TRAITOR"

Sciarra. Death's a devouring gamester,
And sweeps up all;—what think'st thou of an eye?
Couldst thou spare one, and think the blemish recompensed
To see me safe with the other? or a hand—
This white hand, that hath so often
With admiration trembled on the lute,
Till we have pray'd thee leave the strings awhile,
And laid our ears close to thy ivory fingers,
Suspecting all the harmony proceeded
From their own motion without the need
Of any dull or passive instrument?—
No, Amidea; thou shalt not bear one scar,
To buy my life; the sickle shall not touch
A flower, that grows so fair upon his stalk. . . .

Thy other hand will miss a white companion,
And wither on thy arm. What then can I
Expect from thee to save me? I would live
And owe my life to thee, so 'twere not bought
Too dear.

The declining art of drama suffered an abrupt and complete extinction at the breaking out of the Civil War. In March 1639, Davenant had had letters patent granted him for building a new theatre, but the site chosen was not found convenient, and he resigned his right. Sir Henry Herbert was still licensing plays early in 1642. Shirley's *Sisters* passed him in April of that year. In June he licensed a "new play called *The Irish Rebellion*," now not known to exist, and he noted "Here ended my allowance of plays, for the war began in August 1642." In September 1642, the Houses of Parliament published an ordinance that "whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation," all performances of the drama should cease. The law was carried out with great severity, and in February 1648 it was further enacted that all theatres should be dismantled, and all actors of plays, even in private, publicly whipped, the audiences being individually fined. This was actually carried out, for while some unfortunate players were giving a performance of Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*, a party of soldiers burst in and carried them off to punishment. It was not until May 1656, and then with great timidity and vigilance, that Davenant, who had been the last adventurer of the old school, came forward as the pioneer of the new, with an operatic entertainment at Rutland House, and drama arose again in England after a complete eclipse of fifteen years.

CHAPTER IX

JACOBEAN PROSE

WHILE the condition of poetry and drama in the age which we are now considering was in a very high degree satisfactory and healthy, that of prose was singularly the reverse. The reign of James I. is one of the most discouraging in our history so far as the advance of prose style is concerned. Two English works of great importance, *The Advancement of Learning*, in 1605, and *The History of the World*, in 1614, have been described in an earlier chapter, for they belong to the maturity of those characteristically Elizabethan authors, Bacon and Raleigh. The English *Bible*, in its final form, is the glory of James I., but in like manner it has been discussed on previous pages, as representing, in its essential character, the revised and completed labours of many sixteenth-century divines from Tyndale and Coverdale down to Parker and his bishops. The *Bible* belongs in its glory to no one man or set of men; it grew, in the eighty years of its evolution, like a cathedral. When these features, at all events, are removed from our field of vision, we are struck by the poverty of what remains. The reign of James I. was a period of verse; it was not a period of prose; and we do not discover one other masterpiece to chronicle.

In the ordinary Jacobean prose which we have now to examine we observe a very singular lack of the qualities which belong to growth and encourage to hope. In the very days of Shakespeare, prose, without having reached maturity, is already in decay. The current divinity and history and romance of the early seventeenth century are on the downward, not the upward grade. The mass of them is ponderous, involved, pedantic in a degree not found in the imperfect but vigorous prose-writers of the sixteenth century. If we compare, in the matter of style, Samuel Purchas with Hakluyt, or Morton with Hooker, the decline in lucidity and strength is very remarkable. The whole manner has become complicated and loquacious, with a certain softness which is absolutely decadent. But the parlous state into which English prose was falling is still more surely and more instructively seen by a comparison of it with contemporary French prose. In the mere construction and arrangement of sentences, for instance, it is instructive to compare a page of one of Donne's sermons—and we have nothing better to produce of its kind—with one of Donne's immediate contemporary, St. Francis de Sales. The comparison is between a spirited barbarian and a finished man of the world.

It may be said, however, that the literature of England had for centuries been at least fifty years behind that of France, and that English prose of the

early seventeenth century ought to be weighed against French prose of the middle of the sixteenth. But in that case the advantage is none the less on the side of France. It is not that England did not happen to produce a Rabelais or a Montaigne, because the styles of these men were so extremely personal that they may not have had a direct influence on the national manner of expression. But what was missing in English prose were the formative forces applied by great authors who were a little less individual than Montaigne and Rabelais. For instance, Calvin used the French language with such concise severity, such bitter power, that every Frenchman who read his trenchant sentences instinctively tried to emulate his vigour; while, on the other hand, the sweetness and lightness of Amyot not merely fascinated his readers by their grace, but stimulated them to be graceful themselves. In England we had no one who in any measure acted upon our style as Calvin did on the French; while in place of Amyot, with his pure simplicity, we have to point to Lyly, with his affected amenities and his perilous balance of sentences. Here, indeed, there was stimulus and an encouragement to imitation, but of the most unwholesome kind, so that in fact, while acknowledging the merits of Lyly, we must charge his Euphuism with not a little of the decadence of Jacobean prose, since what he led his unfortunate disciples to do was to strain for delicate effects upon an instrument which was simply out of tune.

It is perhaps not surprising that history did not flourish in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for it merely underwent the depression which affected this branch of literature throughout Europe. But the difference between us and our neighbours was that they had enjoyed, at the close of the Middle Ages, valuable schools of history. In Commines, particularly, France had possessed a great chronicling statesman, a man who could at once be with those who were moving about the centre of affairs and observe the movements in the spirit of a philosopher. With all the romantic charm of Raleigh, he makes no pretension to be a psychologist; he is scarcely curious as to the reasons which guide men to their actions. The French historians of the sixteenth century had in no single case equalled Commines in genius, but they had followed him with careful enthusiasm. He was their model, and we in England had no great man to follow. Even the impassioned patriotism of the best Frenchmen, although not less felt on our side of the Channel, received far poorer expression, from the lack of skill and practice which our orators enjoyed.

The style of the lesser English historians was artless and casual, and Sir JOHN HAYWARD took credit to himself for giving it a classical turn. Sir Henry Craik, who has recently drawn attention to his writings, holds that Heyward was justified in his self-gratulation, and that his books "mark a distinct step forward in the historical style." He attempted to improve upon the old humdrum chroniclers by arranging his events rhetorically, in the manner of Livy, whom he followed in putting dramatic speeches into the mouths of his prominent personages. This had been done by Machiavelli

and others, and although it is contrary to modern scientific methods, it was not unfavourable to the literary form of history. A humbler writer was the industrious John Speed (see p. 80), who laboured under the disadvantage of a lack of education. He was a great collector and compiler, and before he essayed his own *History of Great Britain*, Speed not merely spent years in making himself acquainted with what had been gathered together by his predecessors, but he called in other and more learned men than himself to help him. Among these the most eminent was "that worthy repairer of eating Time's ruins," Sir Robert Cotton (see p. 80), who revised, corrected and polished the whole work before Speed ventured upon issuing it. Cotton was the leading antiquary of the age, and his "cabinets were unlocked, and his library continually set open to the free access" of Speed and of his army of assistants. These men had much in common with the restless city chronicler of a previous generation, John Stow. Like him, they thought mainly of collecting and arranging. The accuracy of the documents affected them little, and their philosophical import not at all, but they amassed material with the energy of the coral insect. While we mention their modest services, we should not forget those of Sir HENRY SPELMAN, who had something of the spirit of Stubbs and Freeman, since he would not adopt the rhetorical paraphrases at that time fashionable, but in compiling the civil affairs of the country down to Magna Charta, whenever he could do so printed them in the exact words of his authorities. But the excellent Spelman is hardly to be included among writers of English prose.

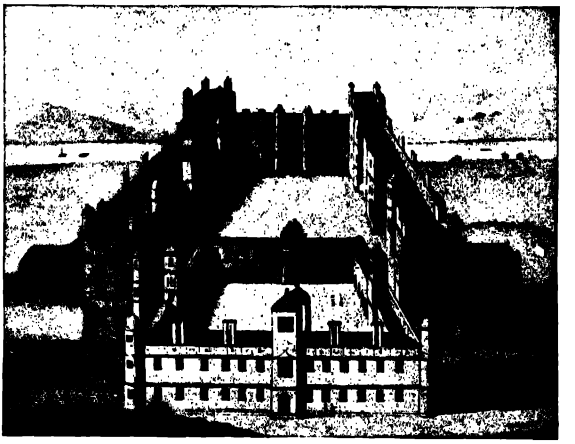


Sir John Hayward
From the scarce engraved portrait by Crispin de Passe

Sir John Hayward (1564–1627) was born at Felixstowe about 1564, and was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge. His *First Year of Henry IV.* appeared in 1599, with a dedication to Essex in such glowing terms that Queen Elizabeth ordered Bacon to examine the book for treason. The reply was that the Queen need not "rack his person," but his style, as he had committed no treason, but a great deal of felony by his plagiarisms. James I. liked Hayward, and patronised his various publications, knighting him in 1619; and he acted as a sort of historiographer to the unfortunate Prince Henry. Hayward worked with Camden at Chelsea College. **Sir Henry Spelman** (1564–1641), a lifelong friend and associate of each of the preceding historians, was born at

Congham, near Lynn Regis. He was an Anglo-Saxon scholar who mainly composed his archæological and historical works in Latin, but his *Life of King Alfred the Great*, which remained in MS. until Hearne published it in 1709, was composed in English. Spelman was a scholar of prodigious energy and perseverance, and filled vast storehouses with information which later investigators have referred to at their ease. The relation of each of the writers mentioned in this chapter to the illustrious Camden, who was their intellectual father, must not be overlooked.

The writers who have just been mentioned were contented to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for those who came after them, but RICHARD KNOLLES seems to have been ambitious to achieve fame in his own person as a picturesque writer. If this was his aim, we have to admit that to a partial and fitful degree he succeeded in attaining it. His one book was still widely read long after its author passed away, and has met with admirers among the most punctilious of modern critics. Dr. Johnson had an extraordinary enthusiasm for Knolles, whom he considered, as a writer, the greatest among British historians. He said that "his style, though sometimes vitiated by false wit, is pure, nervous, elevated and clear." Hallam, Southey and Coleridge were also admirers of Knolles, and Byron attributed to the reading of *The History of the Turks* in childhood "the oriental colouring which is observed in my poetry." It must be confessed that Knolles' huge folio, adorned with plates of all the Sultans, real and fabulous, has ceased to attract readers. The subject, so keenly interesting to Jacobean readers, has become hopelessly remote to us. To enjoy the rolling sentences and haughty rhetoric of *The History of the Turks* we must throw ourselves back to the leisurely times in which it was composed. Still Knolles is as likely as any Jacobean prose writer extant to enjoy one of those sudden revivals of literary reputation which occur from time to time. At present his fame, if not precisely extinct, is certainly dormant, and we cannot any longer see the flamboyant Amuraths and Mustaphas as they were seen by the simple, single-minded and romantic old dominie of Sandwich.



Chelsea College

From Grose's "Military Antiquities," 1788

Richard Knolles (1548?–1610) was born at Cold Ashby, in Northamptonshire, and educated at Lincoln College, Oxford, of which he was made a fellow in 1570. He was poor, and his abilities attracted the notice of a prominent Kentish lawyer, Sir Roger Marwood, who made Knolles master of the Grammar School of

Sandwich. In this little town he resided for the remainder of his life. It appears that Knolles had always been fascinated by Turkish history, but soon after 1590 he settled down to the composition of a great work on the subject. While he was preparing, in 1598, the French antiquary, J. J. Boissard, published a Latin *Lives of the Sultans* at Frankfort; this greatly encouraged Knolles, who, to tell the truth, did not scruple to poach systematically on Boissard's preserves. In 1603 Knolles published his *General History of the Turks*. He continued to enlarge it, and after his death it was further revised by other hands. Knolles was buried at Sandwich on July 2, 1610.

The question of the toleration of religious dissent, and of Church discipline generally, produced an enormous amount of printed matter to very little of which the word "literature" can any longer, even by indulgence, be applied. Many years ago, Mr. Swinburne, commenting on the romantic interest, literary and linguistic, which attaches to all Elizabethan and Jacobean writings, suggested that sooner or later every book of that period might be reprinted with some profit,—except, of course, the divinity. This exception on the part of a scholar so enthusiastically devoted to the Jacobean genius exemplifies the worthlessness of the body of controversial theology. Our language produced under Elizabeth and under James I. two theologians of genius—Hooker and Donne respectively, one in each generation. If we remove these two, the residue is seen to be poor indeed. As to the spirit of it, factious, intolerant and rude, we have only to study Bacon's *Pacification and Edification of the Church of England* to learn how its strident notes jarred on the ear of that urbane philosopher. It was perceived quite early in the seventeenth century by perspicuous statesmen, that the English Church had to deal with two very dangerous and insidious enemies, foes whose peril was greater in that they were of her own household. These were Catholicism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other. Almost on James I.'s arrival in London the Millenary Petition showed him what a profound interest all classes of his subjects took in ceremonial legislation, and this was a theme about which the author of the *Basilicon Doron* of 1599 was as eager as the keenest of them.



Sir Henry Spelman
From an old engraving

The importance of all these enactments and solutions was immense; but the literature which prepared the way for and accompanied them was, as a

rule, poor indeed. Most of the theological books of this period read like so many notes in a diary. They are strings of detached observations, or more commonly citations, to be used in court by an advocate. They are full of illustrations and parallels; the juridical entirely excludes the imaginative or even the rhetorical order of ideas. Nothing could exceed the dreariness, the ineffectual dulness of the writings of most of James I.'s leading bishops. RICHARD MONTAGU (1577–1641), who became Bishop of Chichester, was an extremely effective controversialist in the taste of the day, and in that defence of his own High Church views and of the King's policy, which he published in *Appello Cæsarem* in 1625, he produced the most famous pamphlet of the day. But Montagu is now absolutely unreadable. The King greatly admired the pamphlets and treatises of Andrewes, largely, no doubt, because that prelate, in his Latin discourses, gave himself some breadth of movement and aimed at a certain literary effect; but these writings have no place in English literary history. Nothing displays the poverty of English theological literature at the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, so violently as to compare it with what was best in contemporary France, with the imaginative freshness and fulness, the broad rich wave of metaphor and illustration, which poured from the pulpit of St. Francis de Sales.



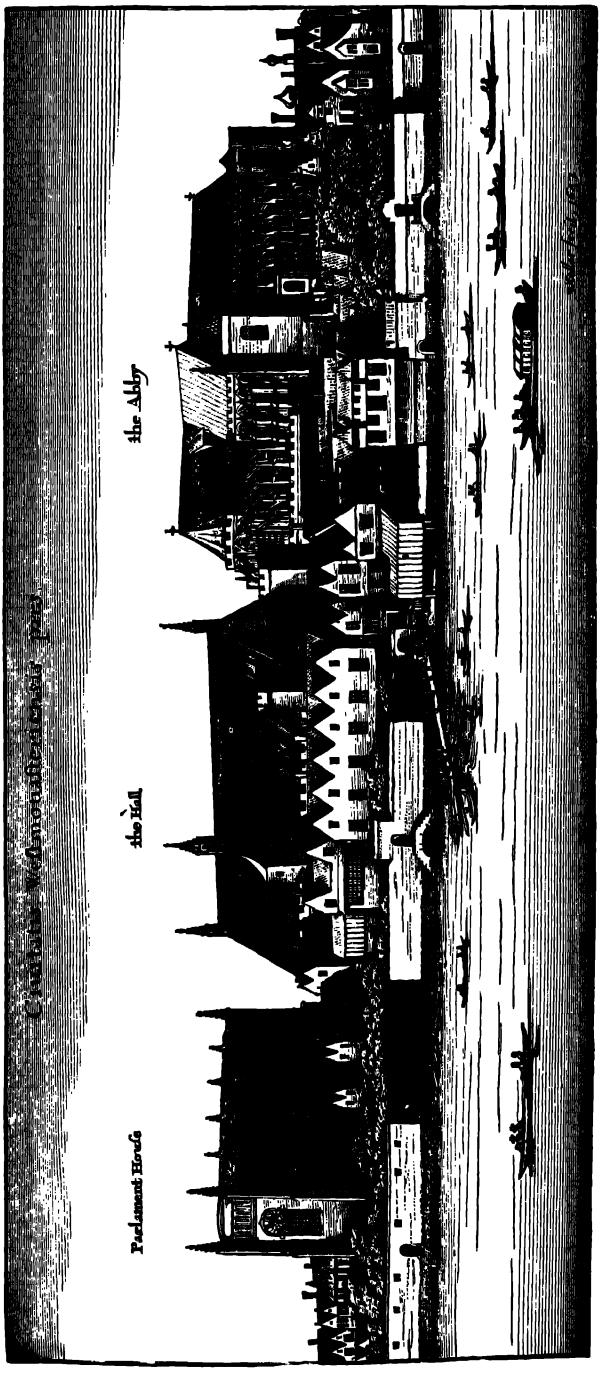
Title-page of "The History of the Turks," 1603

In turning sadly back to the poverty of English theology, with its ostenta-

tion of patristic learning, its lumbering gait, its undignified scrappiness, we see the ill effect of the moral passions of the moment. It was an age of controversy, and wrangling discussion is not good for prose. Moreover, a taste for mere casuistry was greatly encouraged by James I. We are told that "the King longed to discourse with a man who had dedicated his studies to that useful part of learning," and ROBERT SANDERSON (1587–1663), Bishop of Lincoln, owed his promotion to the reputation he enjoyed for his skill in chopping straws of dogma. This admirable man, who grew in his old age to be the most dignified figure in the English Church, is an instance of the divorce between theology and literature. His popularity as a writer was immense; of his *Lectures* of 1615 there were sold 10,000 copies. His philosophical disquisitions gave him high authority. But to read the dense and ponderous volumes of Sanderson would nowadays be a task which even an ecclesiastical historian might shrink from. Among the pure casuists, JOSEPH HALL was the most agreeable writer, and his ingenious, fluent and sophistical meditations may still be examined with pleasure. JAMES USSHER (1581–1656), the famous Archbishop of Armagh, is all coagulated learning. WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602), in whom the seventeenth century proclaimed an English Calvin, was highly popular as an awakener of the Puritan conscience, and possessed high pretensions as a writer, but his salt has lost its savour. Of lesser theologians it would certainly be out of place to speak in this purely literary compendium.

It is in the pulpit effusions of the Jacobean theologians that we find what is most encouraging to a student of literature. It was the practice to recite a discourse which had been prepared before, and which, if possible, was learned by heart. In many cases it was written down as an aid to memory, and locked away for future use; this is how the posthumous sermons of Donne and Andrewes have been preserved for us. Sanderson, whose memory was painfully infirm, was the earliest preacher who read his discourse from the pulpit. Until his day something of the miraculous prestige of heaven-descended oratory was sought to be preserved by the most famous divines. The *Sermons* of the angelical LANCELOT ANDREWES, "the star of preachers," display to us the qualities which were most enthusiastically welcomed from the pulpit in the days of James I. The oddity of phraseology, the affectations, quips and pranks of style, are so extraordinary in the surviving English writings of Andrewes that it is difficult to realise that they were once considered exemplary and found impressive. In his own age, the strange gymnastics of the bishop's language were not unobserved, but were the objects of adoring emulation. His fellow-translator on the *Authorised Version*, NICHOLAS FELTON, Bishop of Ely (1556–1626), admits that he tried hard to write like Andrewes, "and had almost marred my own natural trot by endeavouring to imitate his artificial amble." It was said, in a less eulogistic spirit, that Andrewes had "reduced preaching to punning." There must have been something radically wrong in the taste of an age which persuaded the most saintly of its prelates, a man of the purest and noblest character, to indulge

in such linguistical buffooneries as deface the *Sermons* of Lancelot Andrewes. But it must not be forgotten that he looked upon Latin as the vehicle of his serious and imporant declarations, and that his sermons, in which in lighter mood he sported indulgently with his courtly audiences, were not prepared by himself for publication. In that vast labour for the Church of England, in which Andrewes stood forth as *incomparabile propugnaculum*—an incomparable bulwark—his English writings took a negligible place.



Westminster in the Seventeenth Century
From a print by Hollar, 1647

Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626) (see p. 101) was born at Allhallows, Barking, in 1555. He was an excellent scholar at Merchant Tailors' School, and gained a fellowship at Pembroke College, Cambridge. When Jesus College, Oxford, was founded, young Andrewes was invited to be one of its foundation fellows, and in 1580 he took holy orders. He was a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, who appointed him one of her chaplains and Dean of Westminster. At the accession of James I. Andrewes rose higher still in Court favour, and was made Bishop of Chichester in 1605, and had promotions showered upon him.

Andrewes became successively Bishop of Ely and of Winchester. He headed the list of authorised translators of the Bible in 1611. Fuller tells us that James I. had so great an awe and veneration for Andrewes that, in the bishop's presence, he refrained from that uncouth and unsavoury jesting in which he was accustomed to indulge at other times. This admirable prelate, "an infinite treasure, an amazing oracle," died at Winchester House, Southwark, on September 25, 1626. His English *Sermons*, at the particular desire of Charles I., were collected by Laud and Buckeridge, and ninety-six of them were published in 1628. In his lifetime there had only appeared a little volume of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, entitled *Scala Cœli*, in 1611.

One fault is certainly lacking to the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes: they are not pompous. They are, on the contrary, highly colloquial, and they have come down to us exactly as they must have been spoken, less "touched up" for the press than any other theological writings of the time. A perfectly fair example of them,—at their best indeed,—may be quoted from that *Of the Sending of the Holy Ghost*, preached on Whitsunday, 1617:

> How comes the heart broken? The common hammer that breaks them [*sic*] is some bodily or worldly cross, such as we commonly call heart-breakings. There be here in the text [Luke iv. 18, 19] three strokes of this hammer, able I think to break any heart in the world.
>
> Captivity. They be captives first; and "captives" and "caitiffs," in our speech, sound much like one. It is sure a condition able to make any man hang up his harp, and sit weeping by the waters of Babylon. There is one stroke.
>
> Then follows another, worse yet. For, in Babylon, though they were captives, yet went they abroad, had their liberty. These here are in prison; and in some blind hole there, as it might be in the dungeon, where they see nothing. That, I take it, is meant by "blind" here in the text; blind for want of light, not for want of sight, though these two both come to one, are convertible. They that are blind, say they are dark; and they that be in the dark, for the time are deprived of sight, have no manner use of it at all, no more than a blind man. Now they that row in the galeys, yet this comfort they have, they see the light; and if a man see nothing else, the light is comfortable. And a great stroke of the hammer it is, not to have so much als that poor comfort left them.
>
> But yet are we not at the worst. One stroke more. For one may be in the dungeon and yet have his limbs at large, his hands and feet at liberty. But so have not those in the text, but are in irons; and those so heavy and pinching, as they are even τεθραυσμένοι, "bruised," and hurt with them. See now their case. Captives; and not only that, but in prison. In prison; not above, but in the dungeon, the deepest, darkest, blindest hole there; no light, no sight at all. And in the hole, with as many irons upon them, that they are even bruised and sore with them. And tell me now, if these three together be not enough to break Manasses', or any man's heart, and to make him have *cor contritum* indeed?

The familiarities of the Jacobean sermon were, however, intentional. We are told of Andrewes himself, by his editor, John Buckeridge (1562–1631), Bishop of Ely, that "he was always a diligent and painful preacher," and that his addresses "were thrice revised before they were preached." In Buckeridge, himself a prominent sermon-writer, we find exactly the same peculiarities of style, a mixture of quibbling Euphuism and prosaic homeliness dashed with incessant quotation of Latin; and these may be taken to represent what

was most commonly aimed at in pulpit oratory throughout the reign of James I.

The question of the toleration of religious nonconformity was one which steadily occupied the thoughts of King James, and led to the production of an extraordinary amount of writing. Most of this was wholly ephemeral in form as in matter, but James employed in his controversies the ablest minds which he could command. Andrewes was one of those who defended the King against Bellarmine and his other opponents on the continent of Europe whom his views on episcopacy and allegiance had stung into fury; but the controversial pamphlets of Andrewes were in Latin. Among those who warred with Rome in a ceaseless flow of English "apologies" and "incounters" and "defences" and "replies" none was more active and none quite so vigorous as, in his youth, THOMAS MORTON, afterwards Bishop of Durham. The tracts poured forth by his indefatigable zeal against his Romish adversaries have the faults of the age, but occasionally overcome them, and when Morton is really angry, he writes directly to the point. In such sentences as the following there is wonderfully little of the prevailing languor of prose style:



Thomas Morton
After an engraving by William Faithorne

> If I had not believed upon sufficient evidence that the succession of Bishops in the Church of England had been legally derived from the Apostles, I had never entered into that high calling, much less continued in it thus long. And therefore I must here expressly vindicate myself from a most notorious untruth which is cast upon me by a late Romish writer, that I should, publicly, in the House of Peers, the beginning of the last Parliament, assent to that abominable fiction which some Romanists have devised concerning the consecrating Matthew Parker at the Nag's Head Tavern to be Archbishop of Canterbury. For I do here solemnly profess I have always believed that fable to proceed from the Father of Lies, as the public records still extant do evidently testify. Nor do I remember that ever I heard it mentioned in that or in any other parliament that ever I sate in. As for our brethren, the Protestants of foreign reformed churches, the most learned and judicious of themselves have bewailed their misery for want of Bishops. And therefore God forbid I should be so uncharitable as to censure them for no-churches, for that which is their infelicity, not their fault. But as for our perverse Protestants at home, I cannot say the same of them, seeing they impiously reject that which the others piously desire.

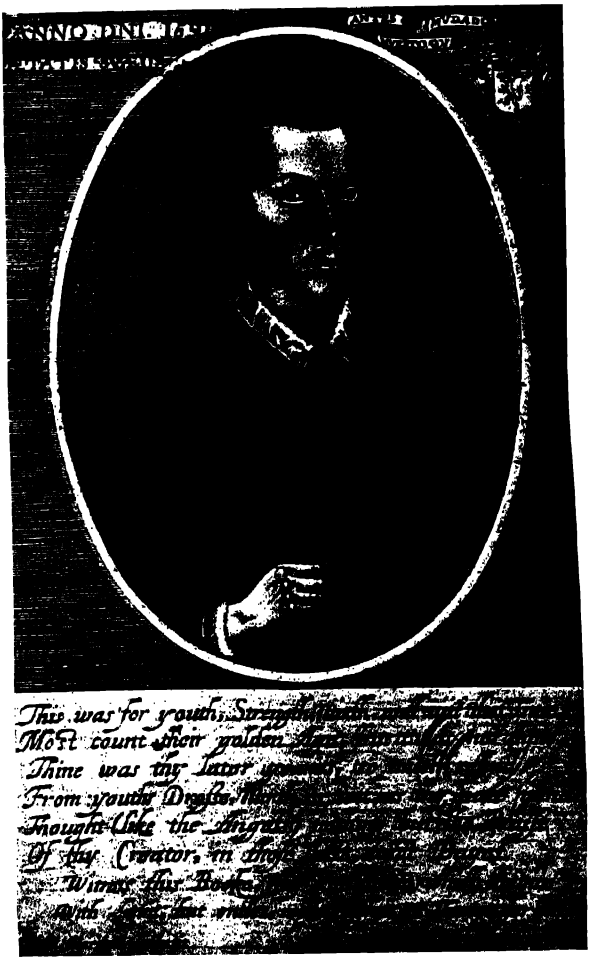
Thomas Morton (1564–1659) was the son of a mercer at York, where he was born on March 20, 1564. He was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, where

he was carefully trained in theology under the Puritan divine, William Whitaker (1548–1595). Morton, however, abandoned the Calvinist section of the Church, becoming more and more strongly opposed to dissent. His literary career began rather late, his earliest work, the *Apologia Catholica*, being published in 1605, but Morton was immediately drawn into controversy, and his writings were extremely numerous. The most effective of them was *The Catholic Appeal* of 1609, which was extremely popular and was considered to be "a final and deadly blow to Rome." Morton was successively Bishop of Chester, Lichfield, and Durham, and suffered greatly at the overthrow of episcopacy; surviving, however, until his ninety-sixth year. He died at Easton-Mauduit on September 22, 1659. **George Hakewill** (1578–1649) is little known, but continues to have a few ardent admirers. He was rector of Heanton Punchardon all through the Civil War, and he published two very remarkable volumes, *The Vanity of the Eye* (1612) and *An Apology of the Power of God* (1627). To his beneficence in 1624 Exeter College, Oxford, owes its chapel, as a recent inscription testifies. The style of Hakewill had the honour to influence Milton and Samuel Johnson.



Portrait of Donne in his winding-sheet
From "Death's Duel," 1630

One of those learned young men whom Morton employed to collect material for his controversial writings against the Romanists was one who had himself been brought up in the Roman Church, the poet JOHN DONNE (p. 292). He now attracts our attention as incomparably the greatest religious orator of the age, the finest theological writer between Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, and perhaps the most ornate and stately composer of English prose in the Jacobean period. He is at the head of the divines who with more or less ingenuity and fervour were pouring forth from their pulpits those strange disquieting sermons which at once disturbed and overawed their audiences. The qualities which mark the astonishing poems of Donne, their occasional majesty, their tossing and foaming imagination, their lapses into bad taste and unintelligibility, the sinister impression of a strange perversity of passion carefully suppressed in them,—all these, though to a less marked degree, distinguish the prose of Donne. Its beauties are of the savage order, and they display not only no consciousness of any rules which govern prose composition, but none of that chastening of rhetoric which had been achieved under Elizabeth by Hooker. Such books of Donne's as his paradox of suicide, the *Biathanatos*, and



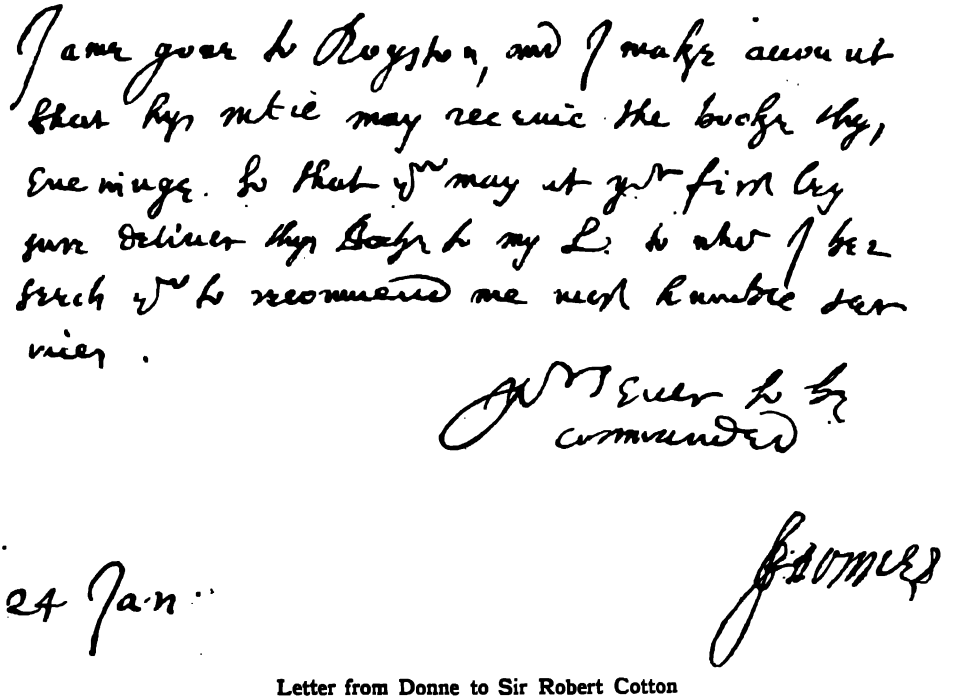
John Donne.

ENGRAVED BY W. MARSHALL, AFTER A PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1591.

his fantastic romance, a diatribe against the Jesuits, called *Ignatius his Conclave*, unquestionably exhibit sympathy with what was morbid in the temper of the time. They are to theology what the tragedies of Ford are to drama.

But when we turn to the *Sermons* of Donne we rise to a much higher plane. Walton, who heard many of these discourses delivered, has left us a wonderful description of their author in the majesty of his prestige at St. Paul's:

> Preaching the Word so as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others: a preacher in earnest; weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself, like an angel from a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives: here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it, and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not; and all this with a most particular grace and an inexpressible addition of comeliness.



Letter from Donne to Sir Robert Cotton

There is a doubt as to the degree in which these magnificent sermons were orally delivered. The preacher certainly held no manuscript before him, while yet he effort of retaining in the memory such a rich coil of interminably complicated sentences is hardly credible. It seems probable that the sermon was carefully composed and written, as we now possess it, but that the preacher merely spoke a discourse on the same lines which he kept as close to his original as he could. His rule was to preach for exactly sixty minutes; he had "his

hour and but an hour," Brathwayte tells us. Andrewes died in 1626, the year that Donne began to preach at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, and the celebrity of Donne soon surpassed that of his most renowned predecessor. Age added splendour to the voice of the fiery and yet sombre Dean of St. Paul's. His hearers, borne along upon the flow of his sinuous melody, now soft and winning, now vehement in storm, now piercing like a clarion, now rolling in the meditative music of an organ, felt themselves lifted up to heaven itself. In the early days of Charles I. a sermon delivered by Dean Donne was the most brilliant public entertainment which London had to offer. One of the most magnificently sustained pieces of religious composition in English literature is the *Second Prebend Sermon*, a long poem of victory over death, which he winds up in this imperial peroration :



Bishop Hall

From an engraving of the picture in Emmanuel College, Cambridge

> As my soul shall not go towards heaven, but go by heaven to heaven, to the heaven of heavens, so the true joy of a good soul in this world is the very joy of heaven ; and we go hither, not that being without joy, we might have joy infused into us, but that, as Christ says, *Our joy might be full*, perfected, sealed with an everlastingness ; for, as He promises, *That no man shall take our joy from us*, so neither shall death itself take it away, nor so much as interrupt it, or discontinue it, but as in the face of death, when he lays hold upon me, and in the face of the devil, when he attempts me, I shall see the face of God (for everything shall be a glass, to reflect God upon me), so in the agonies of death, in the anguish of that dissolution, in the sorrows of that valediction, in the irreversibleness of that transmigration, I shall have a joy, which shall no more evaporate, than my soul shall evaporate, a joy, that shall pass up, and put on a more glorious garment above, and be joy superinvested in glory.

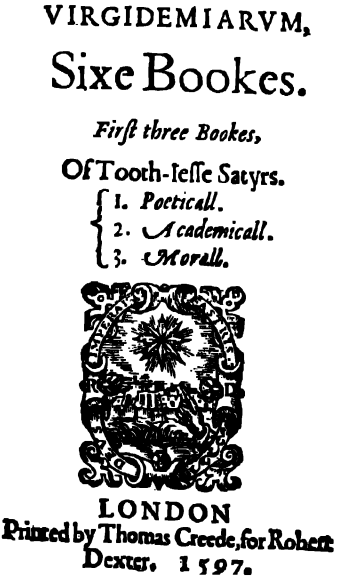
The student may with advantage compare the structure of this sentence with that of some of De Quincey's most studied and rolling paragraphs. Less frequent in Donne, but not less welcome when they come, are his descents to the familiar and the confidential. In the *Funeral Sermon for Sir William Cockayne* he tells us how difficult he found it to concentrate his thoughts in pure devotion :

> I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in and invite God and his angels thither ; and when they are there, I neglect God and His angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door ; I talk on, in the same posture of prayer ; eyes lifted up, knees bowed down, as though I prayed to God ; and if God should ask me when I thought last of God in that prayer I cannot tell : sometimes I find that I forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a fear of to-morrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer.

Donne's famous treatise on self-homicide, the *Biathanatos*, is difficult to quote from, but one striking passage may be detached from its chain of cited instances and legal arguments:

> Since I may without flying, or eating, when I have means, attend an executioner or famine; since I may offer my life, even for another's temporal good; since I must do it for his spiritual; since I may give another my board [plank] in a shipwreck, and so drown; since I may hasten my arrival to heaven by consuming penances,—it is a wayward and unnoble stubbornness in argument to say, still, I must not kill myself, but I may let myself die; since, of affirmations and denials, of omissions and committings, of enjoining and prohibitory commands, ever the one implies and enwraps the other. And if the matter shall be resolved and governed only by an outward act, and ever by that; if I forbear to swim [when thrown into] a river, and so perish, because there is no act, I shall not be guilty; and yet I shall be guilty if I discharge a pistol upon myself, which I know not to be charged, nor intended harm, because there is an act.

The sermons of Hall are lively and sententious, but not convincing. His adversaries charged him, to his great indignation, with loquacity, and advised him to let his "words be less in number." In spite of his anger, the advice was needed; Hall's verbose and chattering style is very tedious, when he allows it to carry him away "in an unprofitable babbling." But he did not suffer from the Jacobean crabbedness, or from that stagnation of sentences which makes some earlier divines so difficult to read. He flows along easily enough, even diffusely, even laxly. In controversy Hall remembers his early training as a satirist; in his devotional exercises he strikes us as rather ingenious than fervent, more intelligent than impassioned.


VIRGIDEMIARVM,
Sixe Bookes.
Firſt three Bookes,
Of Tooth-leſſe Satyrs.
1. *Poeticall.*
2. *Academicall.*
3. *Morall.*
LONDON
Printed by Thomas Creede, for Robert Dexter. 1597.

Title-page of Hall's "Virgidemiarum," 1597

There was little promise of its saintly close in the early part of the career of **Joseph Hall** (1574–1656). He was born at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Here he seems to have resided, and to have been prominent among the wild University wits. In 1597 he published his six books "of toothless satires"—*Virgidemiarum*—of which some account has already been given. These display an undisciplined spirit, much hot anger against the poets of the time, and a narrow antagonism to progress. Nothing could be less spiritual than Hall's attitude to life in these juvenile satires, the fallacies of which Milton afterwards exposed. In 1601, however, he took the college living of Halsted, but his residence was not such as to prevent him from travelling

much in the Netherlands and elsewhere. After a somewhat stormy career, Hall was made Dean of Worcester, and then, in 1627, Bishop of Exeter, being translated in 1641 to Norwich. During the Civil War his cathedral was desecrated and he himself driven with ignominy from his palace, reduced to beggary and imprisoned, as he describes in his *Hard Measure* of 1674. But he survived until 1656, after having written a sort of autobiography in his *Observations on some Specialities of Divine Providence.* In his last illness Hall was attended by Sir Thomas Browne, who venerated him.

A passage from one of Hall's sermons gives a fair impression of his manner as a preacher:

From "IT IS FINISHED"

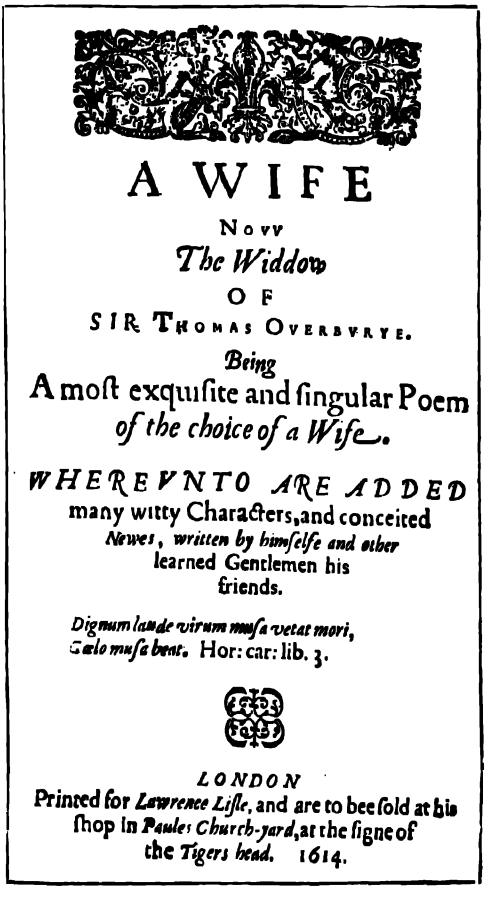
Every one of our sins is a thorn and a nail and a spear to him. While thou pourest down thy drunken carouses, thou givest thy Saviour a potion of gall. While thou dispiritest His poor servants, thou spittest on his face. While thou puttest on thy proud dresses and liftest up thy vain heart with high conceits, thou settest a crown of thorns on his head. While thou wringest and oppressest his poor children, thou whippest him and drawest blood of his hands and feet. Thou hypocrite, how darest thou offer to receive the sacrament of God with that hand which is thus imbued with the blood of him whom thou receivest? In every ordinary thy profane tongue walks, in the disgrace of the religious and conscionable. . . . Now are we set on the sandy pavement of our theatre, and are matched with all sorts of evils; evil men, evil spirits, evil accidents, and, which is worst, our own evil hearts. Temptations, crosses, persecutions, sicknesses, wants, infamies, death,—all these must in our courses be encountered by the law of our profession. . . . God and his angels sit upon the scaffolds of heaven and behold us. Our crown is ready. Our day of deliverance shall come. Yea, our redemption is near, when all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and we that have sown in tears shall reap in joy.



Sir Thomas Overbury
After a portrait by Cornelius Janssen

With an important movement in the English literature of this time Hall was also identified. If we hold that in the greater part of the reigns of James I. and Charles I. the development of prose style was generally arrested, it must be admitted that it did blossom forth in the fashionable imitations of the clear and lively sketches which the antique world attributed to Theophrastus, the pupil of Aristotle. In 1592, Casaubon, to whom and to Scaliger the modern literatures of Europe owe so great a debt, had edited Theophrastus with a luminous commentary. This attracted the attention of English writers to him, and Hall, in his *Characters of Virtues and Vices* of 1608, and his "occasional meditations," introduced the fashion for composing short essays in humorous philosophy. Theophrastus had confined himself to studies of the intrinsic behaviour

of representative men. Joseph Hall, in his entertaining little book, had added the qualifications for holding certain special offices. He was followed by a book to which adventitious circumstances lent a glamour of romance, the extravagantly popular *Characters* (1614) of Sir THOMAS OVERBURY. As time went on, the example of Theophrastus, as seen through Hall and Overbury, combined with the imitation of Bacon to produce a curious school of comic or ironic portraiture, partly ethical and partly dramatic, typical examples of which in the next generation were the sketches of Earle and Owen Feltham, and the *Country Parson* of George Herbert. No smal addition to the charm of these light essays-in-little was the hope of discovering in the philosophical portrait the face of a known contemporary. This sort of literature culminated in Europe in the work of La Bruyère, but not until 1688, and was afterwards elaborated by Addison.



A WIFE

NOVV

The Widdow

OF

SIR THOMAS OVERBVRYE.

Being

A moſt exquiſite and ſingular Poem

of the choice of a Wife.

WHEREVNTO ARE ADDED

many witty Characters, and conceited

Newes, written by himſelfe and other

learned Gentlemen his

friends.

Dignum laude virum muſa vetat mori,
Cælo muſa beat. Hor: car: lib. 3.

LONDON

Printed for *Lawrence Liſle*, and are to bee ſold at his ſhop in *Paules Church-yard*, at the ſigne of the *Tigers head*. 1614.

Title-page of Overbury's "Wife," 1614

The name of **Sir Thomas Overbury** (1581–1613) was rendered popular to excess by the mysterious crime, the most scenic of that age, of which he was the victim. Overbury was an ingenious young courtier, who formed a close friendship with the King's notorious favourite, Robert Kerr, Lord Rochester. When the latter wished to marry Lady Essex, Overbury opposed the match, and in 1613 was sent in disgrace to the Tower, where Lady Essex, apparently with the connivance of Rochester, procured his murder by slow poisoning. On September 15, 1613, he died, and was buried in the Tower; "and now the great ones thought all future danger to be inhumed with the dead body." The secret, however, was known to several persons, and in 1615 Rochester, now Earl of Somerset, with his Countess, who was the principal in the crime, were arrested on a charge of murder. Four of the accomplices were hanged, but the Somersets were pardoned. The trial, in which some of the greatest persons in England were involved, caused an unparalleled sensation, and the King's own character was in imminent peril. Overbury was found to have left works in prose and verse, and these being collected soon after his tragic death achieved an extreme popularity. His poems are poor, but his prose has considerable grace and brightness.

It is proper to point out that the extremely popular Theophrastian *Characters*, which were published in his name, were "written by himself and other learned gentlemen his friends." The following, whether written by Overbury or one of his companions, offers a favourable example of this popular kind of writing:

A Fair and Happy Milkmaid

Is a country wench, which is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of hers is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel (which is her self) is far better than outsides of tissue; for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silk-worm, she is decked in innocency, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoil both her complexion and conditions; nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul: she rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. In milking a cow, and straining the teats through her fingers, it seems that so sweet a milk-press makes the milk the whiter or sweeter; for never came almond glove or aromatic ointment on her palm to taint it. The golden ears of corn fall and kiss her feet when she reaps them, as if they wished to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that felled them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new-made hay-cock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity: and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair; and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world, like decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and surgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none; yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not painted with ensuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste, that she dare tell them; only a Friday's dream is all her superstition: that she conceals for fear of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the springtime, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.



The Countess of Somerset

With the Theophrastian character-study is closely connected a class of

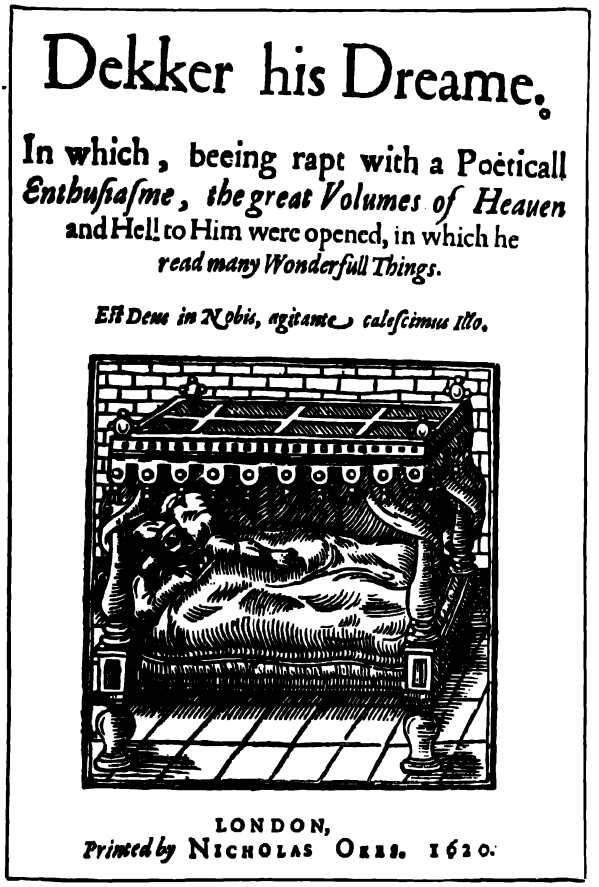
Jacobean literature which preceded and then accompanied it, the sociological and satirical pamphlets of which the most popular were written by THOMAS DEKKER and SAMUEL ROWLANDS. These writers deliberately addressed the reader who wished to be amused and startled, not the student who desired mental improvement. When we, after nearly three hundred years have elapsed, are brought face to face with their amazing pictures of social life, and ask ourselves, Can such things have been? we need to be reminded that a pamphleteer like Dekker was not a statistician or a social reformer, but a caterer for public amusement. It was necessary to rouse his public, and this he had to do by preposterously overcharging his picture. His interiors, his sketches of low life in great towns, his revelations of "conny-catching," "gulling" and horse-coping, are intended to amuse; at every point Dekker more or less consciously exaggerates the words and the things he enumerates. He is not writing as a psychologist or as an historian; he is making a living by writing down, with more or less scrupulous art, what will astonish us and awaken our attention. In the pursuit of this picturesque sensationalism he is often very successful; *Lanthorn and Candlelight* and *The Gull's Hornbook* are among the liveliest productions of the Jacobean age. But they should not be taken too seriously as realistic delineations of life in London. Dekker descends in the natural order from Lyly, Greene and Nash, and he may be taken as a link in the ultimate evolution of the English novel of character. Of his work as a playwright we have already spoken (p. 331).

A True and Hiſtorical
RELATION
Of the Poyſoning of
Sir *Thomas Overbury.*
With the
Severall Arraignments and Speeches of thoſe that were executed thereupon.
Alſo, all the paſſages concerning the Divorce between ROBERT late Earle of *Eſſex*, and the Lady FRANCES HOWARD: with King JAMES's and other large Speeches.
Collected out of the Papers of Sir *Francis Bacon*, the Kings Attorney-Generall.
LONDON,
Printed by *T. M.* & *A. C.* for *John Benſon* and *John Playford*, and are ſold at their Shops in S. *Dunſtan's* Church-yard, and in the Middle Temple.
1651.

Title-page of one of the pamphlets relating to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury

Of **Thomas Dekker** very little is known apart from his voluminous authorship. He was probably of Dutch extraction, and was certainly born in London, perhaps about 1570. As early as 1597 he was known as a dramatist, and there are entries in Henslowe's *Diary* of many lost plays in which he was engaged. He was a merchant-tailor, an industrious literary hack, and extremely poor. Beyond this we have only to record that from 1613 to 1620 he seems to have been in prison, "the bed in which seven years I lay dreaming." Among the best plays of Dekker

are *Old Fortunatus*, *The Honest Whore*, *Satiromastix*, and *The Virgin Martyr*, in the last of which he collaborated with Massinger. Of his very numerous prose treatises, the best known are *The Bachelor's Banquet* (1603), *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), *News from Hell* (1606), *Lanthorn and Candlelight* (1608), and *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609). In his old age Dekker wrote with Ford and Rowley; he disappears after 1640. **Samuel Rowlands** was a similar pamphleteer, who wrote *Hell's Broke Loose* (1606), *The Melancholy Knight* (1619), and a vast number of similar works of entertainment, but who is not known to have contributed to the stage. The following passage, from the *Jests to Make You Merry*, of 1607, displays Dekker in his more sententious mood:


Dekker his Dreame.

In which, beeing rapt with a Poeticall Enthusiasme, the great Volumes of Heauen and Hell to Him were opened, in which he read many Wonderfull Things.

Est Deus in Nobis, agitante calescimus illo.

LONDON,
Printed by NICHOLAS OKES. 1620.

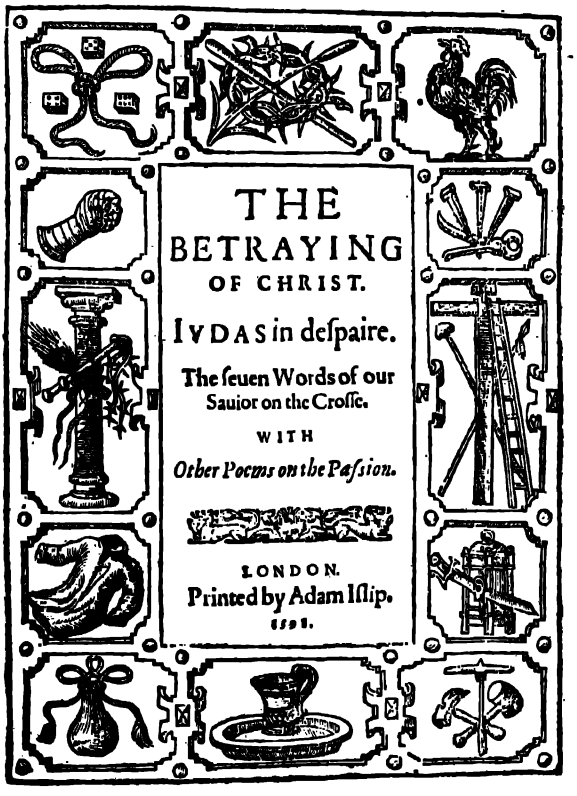
Title-page of Dekker's "Dreams," 1620

> O sacred liberty, with how little devotion do men come into thy temples when they cannot bestow upon thee too much honour! Thy embracements are more delicate than those of a young bride with her lover, and to be divorced from them is half to be damned. For what else is a prison but the very next door to Hell? It is a man's grave, in which he walks alive. It is a sea, where he is always shipwrecked. It is a lodging built out of the world. It is a wilderness where all that wander up and down grow wild, and all that come into it are devoured. It is an unsatiable gulf, a fathomless whirlpool, an everlasting scaffold on which men go daily to execution. It is the cave where horror dwells; it is a bed of terror. No! no! It stands not next door to Hell, but it is Hell itself, for souls lie languishing and cannot die. The keepers of it are churlish, and so are devils; the officers of it tormentors, and what are torments? Goeth not a man therefore toward Hell when he is led to prison? For, alack! what are the comforts he meets there? His wife and children grieve him when he beholds them; his kinsfolk grow blind and cannot see him; his friends are stricken deaf and cannot hear his moans. They upon whose company he spent his coin and credit will not come near the sight of that cold harbour where he lies.

Of other miscellaneous writers of the Jacobean age we have not space to say much. Sir HENRY WOTTON and JOHN HALES were not professional

authors; they were exponents of the highest contemporary cultivation, who looked forward rather than backward, and by their comparative modernness of speech and liberality of view prophesied of future times of light and rest. Unlike in much, Wotton and Hales resembled one another in their quietism, their reluctance to seem emphatic, their delicate intellectual moderation. Each was distinguished by a life-long attachment to Eton.

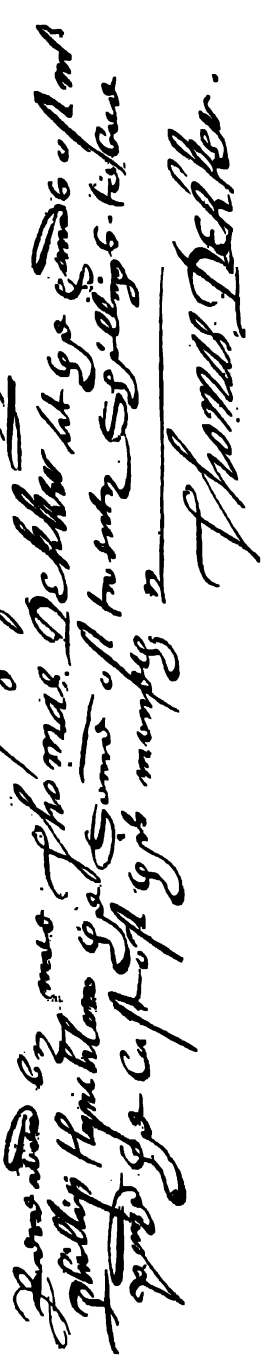
Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639) was born on April 9, 1568, at Boughton Hall, in Kent. After being carefully educated at Winchester and Oxford, he devoted himself to the diplomatic career, settling ultimately in Venice as ambassador. On his retirement from the foreign service, in 1623, Wotton was made Provost of Eton College, and lived there until his death at the close of 1639. His *Life* was written by Izaak Walton. The "ever-memorable" **John Hales** (1584–1656) was born at Bath and educated at Oxford. He entered holy orders, and in 1613 was admitted a fellow of Eton College, being ejected and reduced to destitution in 1649. Hales died in great poverty on May 19, 1656, and was buried at Eton. He was greatly admired by those who knew him; Pearson said that Hales "was a most prodigious example of an acute and piercing wit, of a vast and illimited knowledge, of a severe and profound judgment." He published very little during his lifetime, but three years after his death his *Golden Remains* were collected, consisting of his sermons and miscellaneous writings. Hales was so lucky in obtaining the rewards of scholarship and so cruelly persecuted for possessing them, that he was called "the happiest and the most unfortunate *helluo* of books" who ever lived.


THE
BETRAYING
OF CHRIST.
IVDAS in deſpaire.
The ſeuen Words of our Sauior on the Croſſe.
WITH
Other Poems on the Paſſion.
LONDON.
Printed by Adam Iſlip.
1598.

Title-page of Rowlands' "Betraying of Christ," 1598

The criticism of literature, which had formed an interesting, if imperfect, department of prose writing in the age of Elizabeth, was generally neglected in that of her successor. But at the beginning of the reign of James I. two poets crossed swords in a very important controversy. In 1602 Campion published *Observations in the Art of English Poesy*, the design of which was to

discourage the "vulgar and unartificial custom of rhyming." His idea was, as that of Spenser for a brief moment had been, to introduce into English unrhymed accentuated verse-forms. Campion was instantly answered by Daniel in his *Defence of Rhyme*, an able and elegant treatise commending the normal methods of English versification. Ben Jonson wrote a *Discourse of Poesy*, in which he contrived to contradict both Daniel and Campion, but unluckily this is lost. The success of Bacon's *Essays* gave rise to considerable imitation; the only specimens of this which are worthy even of mention are those published in 1600 and 1617 by Sir William Cornwallis.

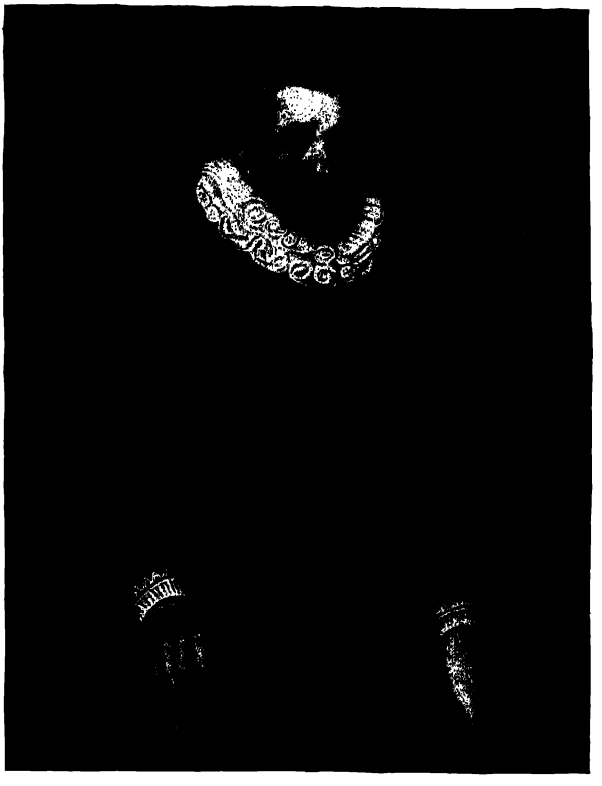


Facsimile receipt for 20s. from Dekker to Philip Henslowe
British Museum MSS. 30,262

Curiosities of literature abound in the Jacobean age, and none is more curious than the *Crudities* of THOMAS CORYAT (1577–1617), a book, as its title-page of 1611 tells us, "hastily gobbled up in five months' travels in France, Savoy, Italy, the Grisons, Switzerland, some parts of High Germany and the Netherlands, newly digested in the hungry air of Odcombe in the county of Somerset, and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling members of this kingdom." The "said travelling Thomas" went also to Turkey, Persia and India, dying at Surat in December 1617. He was absurd and feather-brained, but a quick observer and an entertaining, though prolix and affected writer. Another traveller, the poet George Sandys, published in 1615 an amusing relation of a journey to the Holy Land. Of purely technical treatises expressed in plain language for ordinary readers there were many published at this time. Among them the highly-coloured and agreeably written "vocations" of GERVASE MARKHAM (1568–1637) take a foremost place. He has been called "the earliest English hackney writer," and after having essayed to excel in the higher branches of poetical and dramatic literature in his youth, he settled down to the production of books on agriculture,

gardening, and the conduct of a household, which were extremely popular, and which now throw a most valuable light on the social life of the times. The cheerful chatty admonitions of Gervase Markham probably supply us with as close a reproduction as we possess of what the ordinary talk of educated persons was in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., and in this respect are safer guides than the emphatic scenes of the dramatists and the extravagant diatribes of the pamphleteers. The following sentences are taken from Markham's *Farewell to Husbandry*:

> In the month of December put your sheep and swine to the peese-ricks, and fat them for the slaughter and market. Now kill your small porks and large bacons, lop hedges and trees, saw out your timber for building, and lay it to season; and if your land be exceedingly stiff, and rise up in an extraordinary furrow, then in this month begin to plough up that ground whereon you mean to sow clean beans only. Now cover your dainty fruit-trees all over with canvas, and hide all your best flowers from frosts and storms with rotten old horse litter. Now drain all your corn-fields, and, as occasion shall serve, so water and keep moist your meadows. Now become the fowler with piece, nets and all manner of engine, for in this month no fish is out of season. Now fish for the carp, the bream, pike, trench, barbel, peel and salmon. And, lastly, for your health, eat meats that are hot and nourishing; drink good wine that is neat, spirity, and lusty; keep thy body well clad and thy house warm. Forsake whatsoever is phlegmatic, and banish all care from thy heart, for nothing is now more unwholesome than a troubled spirit.



Sir Henry Wotton
After an original portrait

The great interest in horticulture, too, produced a number of very charming herbals or garden-books, which possessed a certain literary importance. Of these the best was that produced in 1597 by John Gerard (1545–1612), the barber-surgeon, and completed after his death by T. Johnson in 1633. This is richly illustrated with accurate portraits of plants, and forms one of the most interesting and precious books of the Jacobean age

It is well to close our survey of the prose of this period with a brief account of the man in whom its intellectual character seems to be concentrated and sublimated. The central ambition of the prose-writers of the early seventeenth century in England was the collection of knowledge; they rested not from their "unwearied pain of gathering." The searching after antiquities, the

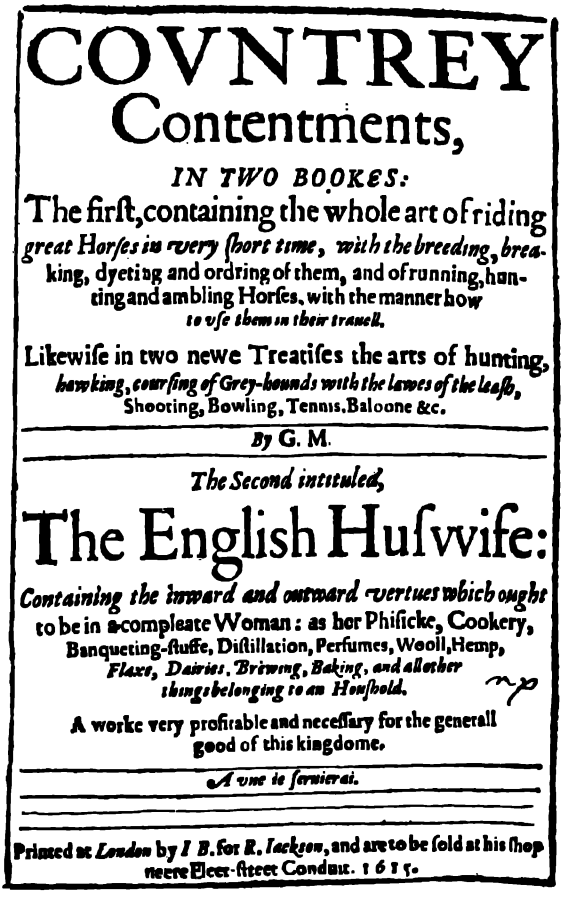


Title-page of the "Crudities," 1611
With portrait of Coryat

collation of authorities, the branding of imposture, the rectification of records, these were the most passionate occupations of intellectual men. It must always be recognised that the genuine love of James I. for books and the knowledge that resides in books, mightily spurred on the zeal of his subjects. To be a scholar was a fashionable employment; it was to be like the King; so that Bacon was not speaking an idle word when, in *The Advancement of*

Learning, he praised "the perfection of your Majesty's learning, which as a phœnix might call whole vollies of wits to follow you." The greatest of these "wits," a man of colossal acquirements and singularly noble character, was JOHN SELDEN, before whom all the scholars of the Jacobean age bowed down as to their "monarch in letters."

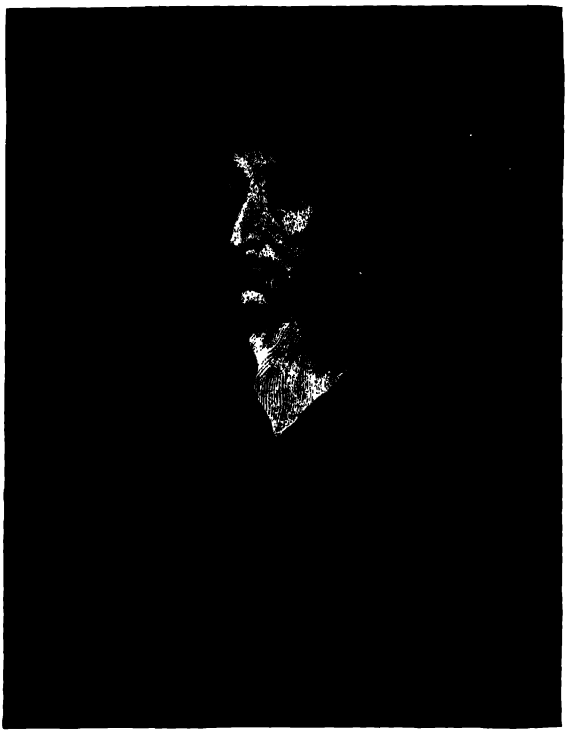
But, although Selden was one of the first men of his time, a giant of erudition and of policy, he was not a great writer of English. In this, too, he was typical of his time. He stood for the past, not for the future. His aim was, in view of the fragility of life, to allow as little knowledge as possible to die with a man; he had no care to add by the creative art to the sum of what would give pleasure to future generations. His *Titles of Honour* starts before the Flood, and his *History of Tithes* goes back to the "prorogations" of Melchisedek. He was the first authority of his age on jurisprudence; he stood in the forefront of Europe in the study of Anglo-Saxon, of the oriental languages, of Talmudic law,—but why should we specify, since he was "of stupendous learning in all kinds and in all languages"? Yet Clarendon, who worshipped him, was obliged to admit that, in the particular of writing English, Selden was "harsh and obscure," and, further, that he was typical of the scholars of his age in "a little undervaluing the beauty of a style and too much propensity to the language of antiquity." His disdain has been fatal to his influence. Selden had no faith in the power of the English language and no enthusiasm for its cultivation. The result is that a man whose whole life was spent with books, and who had one of the most stupendous minds of the century, is hardly included among English authors at all. Of his ponderous works, the only important examples which are not in Latin are the two technical treatises which have already been mentioned, and it is noticeable that the


COVNTREY
Contentments,
IN TWO BOOKES:
The firſt, containing the whole art of riding great Horſes in very ſhort time, with the breeding, breaking, dyeting and ordring of them, and of running, hunting and ambling Horſes, with the manner how to vſe them in their trauell.
Likewiſe in two newe Treatiſes the arts of hunting, hawking, courſing of Grey-hounds with the lawes of the leaſh, Shooting, Bowling, Tennis, Baloone &c.
By G. M.
The Second intituled,
The English Huſwife:
Containing the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a compleate Woman: as her Phiſicke, Cookery, Banqueting-ſtuffe, Diſtillation, Perfumes, Wooll, Hemp, Flaxe, Dairies, Brewing, Baking, and all other things belonging to an Houſhold.
A worke very profitable and neceſſary for the generall good of this kingdome.
A vne ie ſeruiray.
Printed at London by I. B. for R. Iackſon, and are to be ſold at his ſhop neere Fleet-ſtreet Conduit. 1615.

Title-page of Markham's "Country Contentments," 1615

book which bears the name of Selden and is best known to readers, that collection of his *Table Talk*, where, as Coleridge said, he makes "every accident an outlet and a vehicle of wisdom," was actually put down in the language of a slightly later age by his secretary, Richard Milward (1609–1680), and is far simpler in style than any undoctored specimen of Selden's prose.

John Selden (1584–1654) was the son of a minstrel at West Tarring, in Sussex, where he was born on December 16, 1584. He was taught in the Free School of Chichester and at Hart Hall, Oxford. In 1602 he came up to London to study the law, and became acquainted with Sir Robert Cotton, who employed him to copy records and trained him to be an antiquary. In 1613 we find him annotating Drayton's *Polyolbion*, and intimate with Jonson and Browne. His *Titles of Honour* was published in 1614, and his *History of Tithes* in 1618; the latter was suppressed at the King's command. Later, Selden took a very prominent part in legislative reform, and was imprisoned on several occasions. In 1630, after one of these confinements, he withdrew, to recruit his health, to the Earl of Kent's house at Wrest, which now became his residence. His later career belongs to political and legal history. After the Earl of Kent died, in 1639, Selden continued to reside at Wrest, and according to Aubrey was secretly married to the Countess, who left him her property when she died in 1651. We are told that Selden had "a long nose inclining to one side, a full popping eye"; that his conversation was of an astonishing fulness, but not so agreeable to listen to as it would have been had his mind been less charged with knowledge, for "his memory at every moment tripped up his speech." Selden was a prodigious collector of MSS., and 8000 of his volumes are now in the Bodleian Library. He died at his house of White Fryars on November 30, 1654.



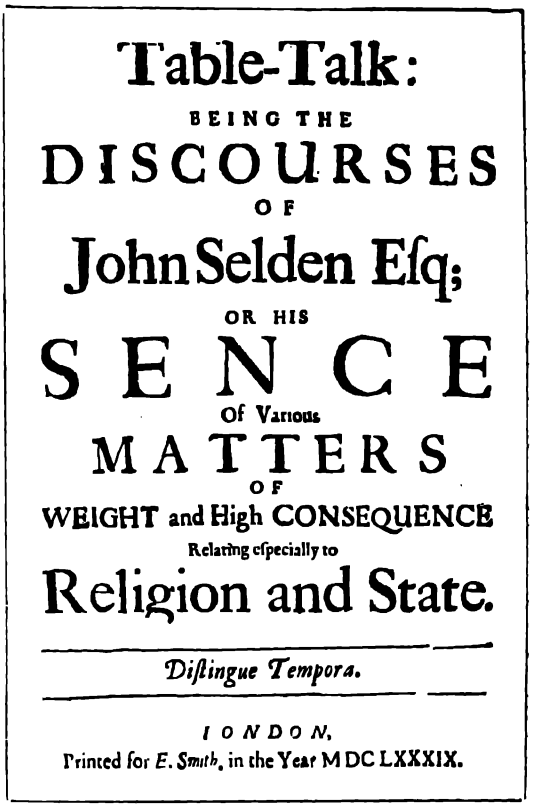
John Selden
After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

From the *Table Talk*, where "the sense and motion are wholly Selden's, and most of the words," we may quote some sentences about Pleasure:

> Pleasure is nothing else but the intermission of pain, the enjoying of something I am in great trouble for till I have it.

'Tis a wrong way to proportion other men's pleasures to ourselves; 'tis like a little child using a little bird, "O poor bird, thou shalt sleep with me"; so lays it in his bosom, and stifles it with his hot breath: the bird had rather be in the cold air. And yet too 'tis the most pleasing flattery, to like what other men like.

'Tis most undoubtedly true, that all men are equally given to their pleasure; only thus, one man's pleasure lies one way, and another's another. Pleasures are all alike simply considered in themselves: he that hunts, or he that governs the Commonwealth, they both please themselves alike, only we commend that, whereby we ourselves receive some benefit; as if a man place his delight in things that tend to the common good. He that takes pleasure to hear sermons, enjoys himself as much as he that hears plays; and could he that loves plays endeavour to love sermons, possibly he might bring himself to it as well as to any other pleasure. At first it may seem harsh and tedious, but afterwards 'twould be pleasing and delightful. So it falls out in that which is the great pleasure of some men, tobacco; at first they could not abide it, and now they cannot be without it.


Table-Talk:
BEING THE
DISCOURSES
OF
John Selden Esq;
OR HIS
SENCE
Of Various
MATTERS
OF
WEIGHT and High CONSEQUENCE
Relating especially to
Religion and State.
Distingue Tempora.
LONDON,
Printed for E. Smith, in the Year MDCLXXXIX.

Title-page of Selden's "Table-Talk," 1689

Whilst you are upon Earth, enjoy the good things that are here (to that end were they given), and be not melancholy, and wish yourself in heaven. If a king should give you the keeping of a castle, with all things belonging to it, orchards, gardens, &c., and bid you use them; withal promise you that, after twenty years to remove you to the Court, and to make you a Privy Counsellor; if you should neglect your castle, and refuse to eat of those fruits, and sit down, and whine, and wish you were a Privy Counsellor, do you think the King would be pleased with you?

(0018)